

Executive Summary

West Virginia Department of Education Office of School Operations & Finance – School Facilities

Introduction: The Roane County Board of Education respectfully requests approval to close Geary and Walton Elementary/Middle Schools and consolidate them into Spencer Elementary (Grades K-5) and Spencer Middle School (Grades 6-8). Also, approval is requested to consolidate all Roane County PreK students into a defined PreK space at Roane County High School. These closures are not contingent on any other actions and are proposed to occur at the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

Action: The Roane County Board of Education requests approval of the following:

- The closure of Geary and Walton Elementary/Middle Schools and their consolidation into Spencer Elementary (Grades K-5) and Spencer Middle School (Grades 6-8). These closures are not contingent on any other actions and are proposed to occur at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. In consideration of this closure, applicable West Virginia State Board of Education policies were reviewed and followed, and documents were available for public inspection for the required period. Public hearings were held on October 27, 2025, for Walton Elementary Middle School; October 28, 2025, for Geary Elementary Middle School; October 29, 2025, for Spencer Elementary School; November 3, 2025, for Spencer Middle School; and November 4, 2025, for Roane County High School. The Roane County Board of Education approved this closure at its November 6, 2025, board meeting.
- A waiver of WVBE Policy 4336 for creating bus routes that will exceed the recommended duration of transportation time for elementary students.



ROANE COUNTY SCHOOLS

JEFFREY MACE
PRESIDENT, ROANE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MICHELLE STELLATO
SUPERINTENDENT

813 CAPITOL STREET
SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA 25276
(304) 927-6400
<http://roanecountyschools.com>

November 7, 2025

Ms. Michele L. Blatt
Superintendent
West Virginia Department of Education
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305-0330

Dear Superintendent Blatt,

Please accept this letter as my formal request for consideration of the closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School, and the consolidation of their K-5 students into Spencer Elementary School, their 6-8 students into Spencer Middle School, and all of the PreK students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Services located in Roane County High School.

Roane County Schools has completed all required steps for the final closure of both schools, with the Roane County Board of Education voting in favor of the closure and consolidations (4-1) during its meeting held Thursday, November 6, 2025. All required documentation is contained within the completed closure document and has been uploaded into the County Approved Document Upload Form provided by the WVDE Office of School Facilities.

Roane County School further requests approval of an amendment to its Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan to align with the Board's November 6, 2025 closure decision. In addition, Roane County Schools requests approval for the necessary transportation waivers under the provisions of WV 126CSR92 and Policy 4336.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. If you need additional information or have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Michelle Stellato
Superintendent
Roane County Schools
304-927-6400
michelle.stellato@k12.wv.us

IMPACT STATEMENT AND SUPPORTING DATA

FOR THE

**PROPOSED CLOSURE OF GEARY AND WALTON ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOLS
AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THEIR GRADES K-5 INTO SPENCER ELEMENTARY,
AND THEIR GRADES 6-8 INTO SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THE
CONSOLIDATION OF PRE-K STUDENTS FROM ALL SCHOOLS INTO THE TO THE
SPACE NOW OCCUPIED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AT
ROANE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

ROANE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Prepared Pursuant to

**W. Va. Codes §18-5-13 and §18-5-13a and
WVBE Policies 6200 and 6204.**

**Roane County Schools
Under the direction and authority of
The West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE)**

**October 27, 28, 29, November 3, 4, 2025
County Board Approval Date: November 6, 2025**

This template (revised 12/06/23) is provided by the WVDE as a technical assistance tool for county boards to use in the preparation of their supporting documents for a proposed school closure or consolidation. This template does not reduce or eliminate the requirements found in WV State Code or

WVBE Policy 6204 as they relate to school closures or consolidations. This document does not replace or supplant legal assistance provided by counsel engaged to represent the county. 

Table of Contents

3.1. County Procedures	3
3.2. Executive Summary and Impact Statements	4
3.2.a Student Enrollment.....	7
3.2.b. Facilities	12
3.2.c. Finance	25
3.2.d. Personnel	30
3.2.e. Student Transportation	36
3.2.f. Student Educational Program.....	42
3.2.g. Community	47
3.3. & 3.4. Public Notices and Hearings.....	51
3.6. County Board Actions.....	56
3.6. Superintendent Verification of Board Actions	57
Appendix of Supporting Data.....	59
Appendix of Supporting Data.....	59
Appendix of Supporting Data.....	60
Appendix of Supporting Data.....	61
Appendix of Supporting Data.....	63

3.1. County Procedures

WVDE Application for school closure and/or consolidation

Roane County Schools proposes the closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the office of student support services at Roane County High School. Hearings will be held as follows:

- October 27, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Walton Elementary Middle School to be held in the Walton Elementary Middle School gymnasium.
- October 28, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Geary Elementary Middle School to be held in the Geary Elementary Middle School gymnasium
- October 29, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Spencer Elementary School to be held in the Spencer Elementary School cafeteria
- November 3, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Spencer Middle School to be held in the Spencer Middle School cafeteria
- November 4, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Roane County High School to be held in the Roane County High School auditorium
- November 6, 2025- 6:00 PM- Regular Meeting of the Roane County Board of Education located at Roane County High School- formal action to be taken on the proposal

County Procedures

This template shall be used to accumulate and present the data that is requested in Policy 6204 and W.Va. Code 18-5-13a to support the closure or consolidation of a WV public school.

The county shall prepare and submit an impact statement and supporting data concerning proposed school closings or consolidations to the WVBE for approval in accordance with this policy and W. Va. Code §18-5-13a. The impact statement and supporting data shall:

- ☒ *be available for public inspection in the office of the county superintendent during the 30 days preceding the date of the public hearing; and*

Be delivered in duplicate to the:

- ☒ *principal of a school that is proposed to be closed or consolidated, and of any school which the county designates to receive the students who are relocated as a result of the closure or consolidation; and*
- ☒ *chair of the local school improvement council (LSIC) representing a school that is proposed to be closed or consolidated, and any school that the county designates to receive the students who are relocated as a result of the closure or consolidation.*
- ☒ *A copy of the notice shall be posted at all schools, bus garages, and maintenance areas in the county in conspicuous working areas, for all professional and service personnel to observe.*

Michelle D. Stellato

Superintendent

Date:

9.23.2025

3.2. Executive Summary and Impact Statements

An impact statement shall be prepared on the following items that will summarize the county's supporting data with page references, as defined in section 3.1. The impact statement and supporting data shall be provided to the West Virginia Department of Education – Office of School Facilities at least 10 business days prior to the period for public posting for the purpose of review and coordination.

The Roane County Board of Education has experienced a significant decline in student enrollment in the past ten years. Overall, student enrollment has dropped by 31%, from 2334 students in the 2014-15 school year, to 1630 in the 2024-25 school year. In July of 2025, the West Virginia Board of Education declared a state of emergency in Roane County Schools (RCS), citing failure to address building utilization, budgetary concerns, over staffing, and a projected deficit of nearly 3 million dollars by the end of the 2025-26 school year. Additionally, Roane County Schools has identified a need to address the per pupil spending disparity that exists between Walton, Geary and Spencer area schools. In an effort to provide a high-quality education program for all Roane County students, the board of education proposes the following document as a closure and consolidation plan that will adequately address the concerns outlined in the 2025 WVBE State of Emergency declaration and allow RCS to function as a fiscally responsible, high-quality educational organization.

As proposed, Roane County Schools would close Geary Elementary Middle School (K-8) and Walton Elementary Middle School (PreK-8), and consolidate the students into Spencer Elementary School (K-5), Spencer Middle School (6-8) and Roane County High School (9-12) adding the RCS Early Education Center to its facility.

Enrollment 3.2.a. (Starting on Page 7)

Over the past decade, Roane County Schools has experienced a consistent decline in student enrollment, falling from 2,334 students in 2015–2016 to 1,630 students in 2024–2025. Both Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School, identified for closure and consolidation, have reflected this downward trend, with Geary decreasing from 309 to 200 students and Walton from 350 to 228 students during the same period.

In contrast, Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and Roane County High School—designated to receive the affected students—have also experienced enrollment decreases, though they continue to maintain larger overall populations and adequate facilities. County demographic data supports these enrollment declines, with a shrinking overall population, lower birth rates, and higher death rates contributing to fewer school-aged children.

Enrollment projections indicate continued declines across the county, particularly in the attendance areas of Geary and Walton, reinforcing the need for consolidation to ensure efficient use of resources and sustained delivery of high-quality educational opportunities.

Facilities 3.2.b. (Starting on Page 12)

Roane County Schools proposes the closure of Geary and Walton Elementary/Middle Schools due to low utilization (34.1% and 33.0%) and the high cost of necessary facility upgrades. Students will be reassigned to Spencer Elementary (K-5), Spencer Middle (6-8), and Roane County High School (9-12 with a new preschool center), all of which provide adequate capacity,

accessibility, and educational services. Spencer Middle is a new facility opened in 2024, while Spencer Elementary and Roane County High require moderate upgrades. Only minor renovations, including a \$700 preschool toilet addition, are needed. The closures are not contingent on SBA funding, and both vacated facilities are intended for sale. All actions align with the county's CEFP and meet WVBE Policy 6204 requirements.

Finance 3.2.c. (Starting on Page 26)

The tables in the Finance section outline the current and projected financial impact of closing Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School, and shifting students to Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and Roane County High School. Current operating costs for Geary and Walton total about \$3.58 million annually, while the receiving schools collectively spend about \$9.66 million. After consolidation, Geary and Walton will only incur minimal utility costs until disposal, while the receiving schools' costs will rise modestly. Overall, the district anticipates net annual savings of roughly \$1.45 million, primarily from reduced personnel expenses, with small added costs in transportation. Additionally, a minor construction expense of \$700 is projected for a preschool restroom addition at Roane County High School. The county's unrestricted general current expense fund has fluctuated over the past five years, peaking at 9.6% of the levy estimate in 2021 before falling to 0.2% in 2024.

Personnel 3.2.d. (Starting on Page 31)

Roane County Schools has reviewed anticipated staffing impacts related to the closure of Geary Elementary Middle and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the reassignment of students to Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and Roane County High School. In alignment with West Virginia Code §18A and staffing formulas, the consolidation is projected to reduce approximately 12 professional and 16 service personnel positions, primarily due to the elimination of duplicate roles. Some of these reductions may occur through attrition, while others will require a reduction in force. Despite these changes, all receiving schools will remain fully staffed to deliver rigorous instruction and student support services, ensuring compliance with state and federal program requirements. Consolidation will also increase opportunities for collaboration among staff and allow more efficient use of resources while maintaining equitable access to certified and highly qualified educators.

Student Transportation 3.2.e. (Starting on Page 37)

Roane County Schools has analyzed student transportation related to the closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School and the reassignment of students to Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and Roane County High School. Adjustments to existing routes will ensure safe and efficient travel, with many students experiencing reduced ride times as a result of consolidation. Also, the existing route adjustment will cause a reduction in the number of roads traveled and how far the buses will be able to run on specific roads to ensure travel times are under one hour. A limited number of routes will require additional time, particularly for elementary students, and waivers under WVBE Policy 4336 will be requested where necessary. Transportation Tables 1–6 provide detailed information on modified routes, current and projected travel times, and net changes for all affected schools. While some elementary routes exceed the 30-minute guideline, the county has adequate capacity, staff, and vehicles to manage the consolidation. Travel time comparisons to neighboring county schools confirm that designated receiving schools remain appropriate. Overall, transportation services

will continue to meet state requirements, with minimal impact on students and improved operational efficiency.

Student Educational Program 3.2.f. (Starting on Page 43)

The proposed closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School, with students consolidating into Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and Roane County High School, will strengthen educational opportunities while meeting all federal, state, and local requirements. Consolidation allows students to learn in safe, modern facilities aligned to appropriate grade levels, with access to a rigorous standards-based curriculum, expanded course offerings, and enhanced extracurricular opportunities. Teachers will benefit from increased collaboration through Professional Learning Communities and vertical teaming, supporting consistent curriculum delivery and improved student achievement. Students will continue to receive academic, social, and emotional supports, including access to counselors, nurses, and specialized staff, ensuring that all learners' needs are met. Larger, consolidated schools will provide broader enrichment opportunities, more efficient use of resources, and stronger preparation for high school, college, and career readiness. Roane County Schools affirms that all relevant codes and policies—including Policies 2419, 2510, 2520, 6200, and 6204—have been fully considered to ensure equitable, thorough, and efficient education for every student.

Community 3.2.g (Starting on Page 48)

The proposed closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School, with students consolidating into Spencer Elementary School, Spencer Middle School, and Roane County High School, will impact each community differently. Both Geary and Walton schools have served as central gathering places for events, recreation, and partnerships with local organizations and businesses, meaning their closures may reduce opportunities for community use of those facilities and alter existing patterns of support. However, consolidation also creates opportunities for students and families to build broader relationships within Spencer, where resources and partnerships are more concentrated. Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and Roane County High School already maintain strong ties with hospitals, libraries, banks, businesses, civic groups, and service organizations that will now extend to include students and families from Geary and Walton. While some loss of local school identity is expected, new connections among students, families, staff, and community partners are anticipated to grow, leading to stronger county-wide collaboration and support for students from early childhood through graduation.

3.2.a Student Enrollment

County Procedures

Enrollment and Population Tables

Trends in student population growth or decline in the county for the previous 10 years.

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	2334	2304	2226	2090	2010	1901	1800	1796	1688	1630

Enrollment Table 1

Source: <https://zoomwv.k12.wv.us>

*Trends in student population growth or decline in the attendance area of **Geary Elementary/Middle School** targeted for closure or consolidation for the previous 10 years.*

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	309	314	285	274	270	242	221	229	199	200

Enrollment Table 2

Source: <https://zoomwv.k12.wv.us>

*Trends in student population growth or decline in the attendance area of **Walton Elementary/Middle School** targeted for closure or consolidation for the previous 10 years.*

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	350	337	339	320	278	258	237	241	234	228

Enrollment Table 3

Source: <https://zoomwv.k12.wv.us>

*Trends in student population growth or decline in attendance area of **Spencer Elementary School**, which the county designates to receive the students affected for the previous 10 years.*

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	498	559	535	502	476	418	443	454	422	413

Enrollment Table 4

Source: <https://zoomwv.k12.wv.us>

*Trends in student population growth or decline in attendance area of **Spencer Middle School**, which the county designates to receive the students affected for the previous 10 years.*

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	408	429	413	377	376	358	335	331	315	299

Enrollment Table 5

Source: <https://zoomwv.k12.wv.us>

*Trends in student population growth or decline in attendance area of **Roane County High School**, which the county designates to receive the students affected for the previous 10 years.*

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total	668	665	654	617	610	625	564	541	518	490

Enrollment Table 6

Source: <https://zoomwv.k12.wv.us>

Population data and characteristics for the county. At a minimum, the data shall include the total population, number of births, number of deaths, and age composition of the county for the previous ten years. The requisite information shall be cited and may be obtained from local, state, and national agencies for health and statistics.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Population	14,684	14,656	14,664	14,435	14,208	14,043	13,932	13,688	13,482	13,898
Births	172	149	160	132	130	126	133	144	137	126
Deaths	191	199	196	191	216	208	236	193	206	229

*This reflects the most recent data available at the time of this draft from the source used.

Enrollment Table 7

Source: https://dhhr.wv.gov/HSC/SS/Vital_Statistics/Pages/Vital_Statistics.aspx

Age Composition

Year	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70- 79	>80
2014	811	811	1018	855	1431	1667	1962	2271	2035	1313	590
2015	790	790	1039	849	1390	1654	1859	2225	2181	1244	615
2016	755	769	1088	871	1350	1654	1785	2162	2104	1350	610
2017	722	698	1124	860	1358	1659	1693	2117	2177	1277	663
2018	713	778	1024	825	1378	1641	1643	2212	2020	1258	713
2019	671	731	1016	875	1317	1583	1629	2205	1982	1369	642
2020	659	856	890	888	1289	1487	1649	1989	2169	1421	534
2021	670	886	810	1030	1222	1245	1988	2044	2244	1462	528
2022	665	918	692	1009	1318	1324	1852	1922	2279	1529	519
2023	640	896	721	935	1310	1399	1752	1852	2375	1532	509

Enrollment Table 8

Source: <https://data.census.gov/>

Projections of enrollment, by grade and school, in the affected attendance area, for the next ten years.

Geary Elementary/Middle School

Year	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
K	23	9	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6
1	23	22	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6
2	22	22	21	8	8	7	7	7	6	6
3	21	21	21	20	7	7	7	7	6	6
4	18	20	20	20	19	7	7	7	6	6

5	17	17	19	19	19	18	7	6	6	6
6	14	16	16	18	18	18	17	6	6	6
7	20	13	15	15	17	17	17	16	6	6
8	24	19	13	15	15	16	16	16	15	6
Total	182	159	141	131	118	104	92	79	63	54

Enrollment Table 9

Source: <https://roane.sis.k12.wv.us/apps/ptl/ptl100/sso.shtml>

Walton Elementary/Middle School

Year	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
PK	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9
K	21	16	15	15	14	14	12	12	12	11
1	18	20	15	14	14	13	13	11	11	11
2	21	17	19	14	13	13	12	12	10	11
3	25	20	16	18	13	12	12	11	11	10
4	17	24	19	16	17	12	11	11	11	11
5	25	16	23	18	14	16	11	11	11	11
6	15	24	16	22	17	13	15	11	11	11
7	22	14	23	15	21	16	12	14	11	11
8	22	21	14	22	14	20	15	11	13	11
Total	199	184	170	163	148	139	123	114	110	107

Enrollment Table 10

Source: <https://roane.sis.k12.wv.us/apps/ptl/ptl100/sso.shtml>

Spencer Elementary School

Year	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
PK	58	56	53	51	49	47	44	43	41	40
K	84	63	61	58	56	53	51	48	57	45
1	58	83	72	60	57	55	52	50	47	56
2	79	57	81	61	59	56	54	51	49	48
3	74	78	56	81	60	58	55	53	50	49
4	76	73	76	55	80	59	57	51	52	50
5	61	75	71	76	54	79	58	56	50	51
Total	490	485	463	442	415	407	371	352	346	339

Enrollment Table 11

Source: <https://roane.sis.k12.wv.us/apps/ptl/ptl100/sso.shtml>

Spencer Middle School

<i>Year</i>	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
6	76	59	73	70	73	53	75	56	54	51
7	71	74	58	71	68	71	51	73	55	52
8	76	69	72	56	69	66	69	50	71	53
Total	223	202	203	197	210	190	195	179	179	157

Enrollment Table 12

Source: <https://roane.sis.k12.wv.us/apps/ptl/ptl100/sso.shtml>

Roane County High School

<i>Year</i>	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035
9	130	137	125	114	106	110	115	115	92	109
10	131	126	132	121	110	103	106	111	111	89
11	113	127	122	128	117	106	100	103	107	107
12	92	109	123	118	124	113	103	97	100	103
Total	466	499	502	481	457	432	424	426	410	408

Enrollment Table 13

Source: <https://roane.sis.k12.wv.us/apps/ptl/ptl100/sso.shtml>

Projection Method

Explanation of the projection method utilized addressing the relationship between the most recent Certified October Enrollment, the Certified October Enrollment for the previous three years, and the most recent census data for the county.

Roane County Schools uses the Cohort Survival Ratio Technique along with the average decline in enrollment for each school over the last four years. The sources for enrollment data are Zoom WV and WVEIS 2.0 for all schools. The 2025-2026 Certified October Enrollment for Roane County Schools is not available at the time of this draft, but the most current enrollment numbers, from WVEIS 2.0 as of August 22, 2025, are being used. Each school's average rate of enrollment decline for the last four years is as follows:

Geary Elementary/Middle School	5.1%
Walton Elementary/Middle School	4.4%
Spencer Elementary School	1.7%
Spencer Middle School	2.7%
Roane County High School	3.3%

Also, Roane County High School's average retention rate of freshman over the last four years was 11.6%.

Preschool enrollment projections were calculated by using historical census data regarding birth rates and students enrolling in preschool (4-year-olds) on average over the last three years. The birth rate in Roane County for the last three years has declined by 4.2% on average per year. The percentage of preschool students at each school based upon the total births for Roane County was as follows:

Preschool Walton Elementary/Middle School	10.3%
Preschool Spencer Elementary School	46.0%

Since not all 4-year-olds attend preschool, kindergarten enrollment projections were calculated by historical enrollment between preschool and the next year's enrollment in kindergarten. There was a 24.3% increase in students enrolling in kindergarten over the previous year's preschool class.

Finally, we project a continued decline in enrollment for Roane County Schools due to a continuing decline in population.

3.2.b. Facilities

County Procedures

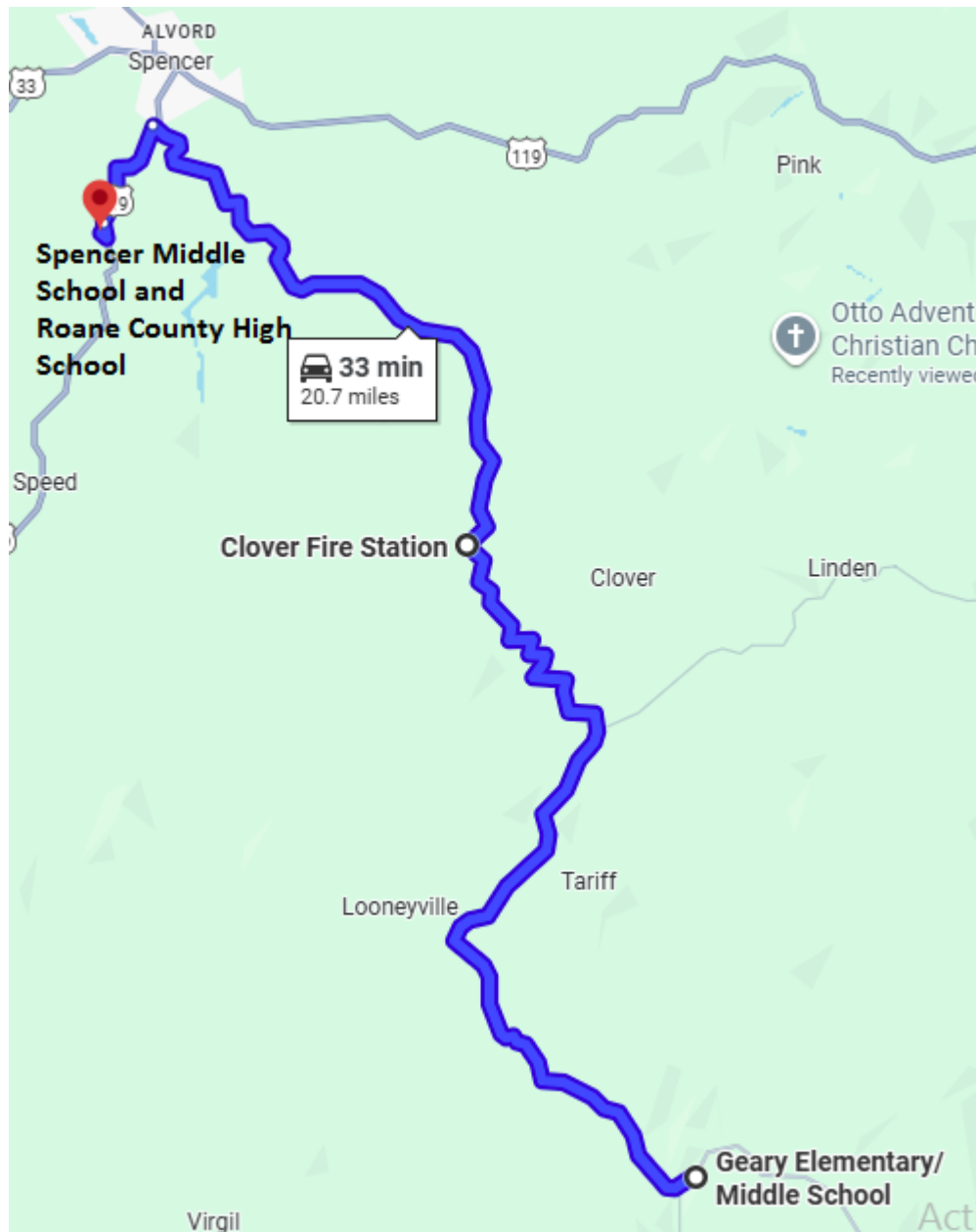
Descriptive Maps

General Reference Maps showing prominent natural and manmade features where the location of school(s) targeted for closure or consolidation and the school(s) that the county designates to receive the students are highlighted.



Map 1 Geary Elementary/Middle School to Spencer Elementary School

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>

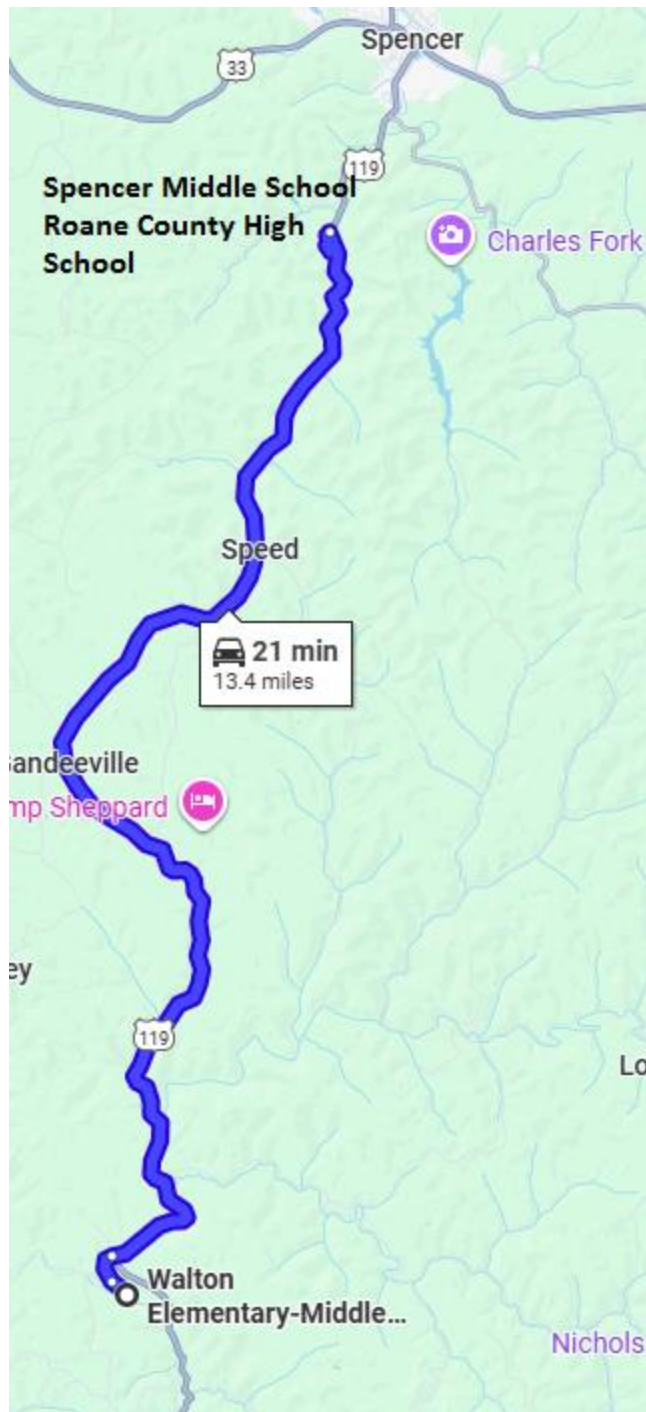


Map 2 Geary Elementary/Middle School to Spencer Middle School and Roane County High School

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>



Map 3 Walton Elementary/Middle School to Spencer Elementary School
Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>



Map 4 Walton Elementary/Middle School to Spencer Middle School and Roane County High School

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>

Charts shall be provided indicating the grade configuration, student enrollment, utilization percentage, and mileage between each school on the map.

School	Grade Config.	Enrollment Before/After Action SY 26/SY 27	Utilization Before/After Action SY 26/ SY 27	Distance to Spencer Elementary	Distance to Spencer Middle	Distance to Roane County High School
Closing Geary Elementary/ Middle	PK-8	Before 182 After 0	Before 34.1% After 0%	19.1 miles	20.7 miles	20.7 miles
Closing Walton Elementary/ Middle	PK-8	Before 199 After 0	Before 33.0% After 0%	14.9 miles	13.4 miles	13.4 miles
Receiving Spencer Elementary	PK-5 Becoming K-5	Before 490 After 653	Before 71.1% After 94.7%			
Receiving Spencer Middle	6-8	Before 223 After 309	Before 43.2% After 59.9%			
Receiving Roane County High School	9-12 Becoming 9-12 with PK Center	Before 466 After 567	Before 39.2% After 47.7%			

Facilities Table 1

Written Facility Condition Description

Written description of the physical condition of the school targeted for closure or consolidation and the school or schools which the county designates to receive the students. This description shall include age, number of buildings, general condition, and adequacy of structural, electrical, and mechanical systems to provide a safe and healthy environment.

Geary Elementary/Middle School

As noted in section 100.016.2 Translating Educational Needs – Building Review of the county’s Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan – Geary Elementary/Middle School located in the southeastern area of the county was constructed in 1980. The facility has three additions 1986, 1995 and 2010. The main building is a 53,463 square feet masonry load bearing structure.

The school sits on a rural ten-acre site in the southeastern area of the county and accesses directly off WV State Rt. 36. The site is not in a flood plain. Bus loading, access and play areas are above average.

The facility is well maintained but needs both exterior and interior upgrades. Upgrades include: concrete walks replacement, new windows, new exterior/interior doors, frames, hardware, plumbing – electrical upgrades and interior finishes. Estimated cost in 2020 for maintenance and upgrades, to current standards, was \$4,370,746.32 to include the following:

- Site upgrades
- Exterior windows and doors
- Interior finishes
- HVAC upgrades
- Interior doors
- Fire alarm and communication upgrades
- Sprinkler System upgrades

Walton Elementary/Middle School

As noted in section 100.016.2 Translating Educational Needs – Building Review of the county’s Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan – Walton Elementary/Middle School located in the southwestern area of the county was constructed in 1965. The facility has four additions 1980, 1986, 1995, and 1997. The main building is a 47,739 square feet masonry load bearing structure.

The school sits on a rural 29-acre site in the southwestern area of the county and accesses directly off US Rt. 119. The site is in a flood plain. Bus loading, access and play areas are above average.

The facility is well maintained but needs both exterior and interior upgrades. Upgrades include: new windows, new exterior/interior doors, frames, hardware, HVAC/HVAC controls, plumbing electrical upgrades and interior finishes. Estimated cost in 2020 for maintenance and upgrades, to current standards, was \$4,598,215.72 to include the following:

- Exterior windows and doors

- Interior finishes
- HVAC upgrades
- Fire alarm and communication upgrades
- Interior doors
- Sprinkler System upgrades
- Kitchen Equipment

Spencer Elementary School

As noted in section 100.016.2 Translating Educational Needs – Building Review of the county’s Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan – Spencer Elementary School located in the town of Spencer was constructed in 1982. The facility has five additions in 1988, 1989, 1991, 1999 and 2010. The main building is a 53,463 square feet masonry load bearing structure.

The school sits on a 27-acre site in Spencer and accesses off WV Rt. 36. The site is not in a flood plain. Bus loading, access and play areas are average.

The facility is well maintained but needs both exterior and interior upgrades. Upgrades include concrete walks replacement, paving, new windows, exterior / interior doors, frames, hardware, plumbing electrical upgrades and interior finishes. Estimated cost in 2020 for maintenance and upgrades, to current standards, was \$3,570,245.80 to include the following:

- Site upgrades
- Exterior windows and doors
- Interior finishes
- Plumbing
- Fire Alarm and communication upgrades
- Interior doors
- Sprinkler System upgrades

Spencer Middle School

Spencer Middle School was opened in 2024 with the latest designs and technological advancements in Education. The main building is a 56,368 square feet masonry load bearing structure.

The school sits alongside Roane County High School on a rural 78-acre site in the south of Spencer and accesses directly off US Rt. 119. The site is not in a flood plain. Bus loading and access are above average.

Roane County High School

As noted in section 100.016.2 Translating Educational Needs – Building Review of the county’s Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan – Roane County High school located south of

Spencer was constructed in 1993. The main building is a 150,175 square feet masonry load bearing structure.

The school sits alongside Spencer Middle School on a rural 78-acre site in the south of Spencer and accesses directly off US Rt. 119. The site is not in a flood plain. Bus loading and access are above average.

The facility is well maintained but needs both exterior and interior upgrades. Upgrades include new windows, new exterior - interior doors, frames, hardware, additional HVAC/HVAC controls, plumbing / electrical upgrades and interior finishes. Estimated cost for maintenance and upgrades in 2020, to current standards, was \$14,197,973.32 to include the following:

- Interior finishes
- Plumbing and HVAC upgrades (75% completed in 2024)
- Lighting and wiring upgrades
- Communication system upgrades
- Interior doors
- Elevator
- Sprinkler System upgrades
- Kitchen Equipment

Educational Programs and Related Student Services

Evaluation of the school targeted for closure or consolidation and the school or schools that the county designates to receive the students in regard to the school(s) adaptability to the present and proposed educational programs, and the provisions of related student services.

Geary Elementary Middle School

Roane County Schools will follow the latest Comprehensive Education Facilities Plan when planning and developing facility improvements at the receiving schools, Spencer Elementary School, Spencer Middle School, and Roane County High School. Each of the schools provides adequate space and accommodations for students with special needs, and includes dedicated rooms for music, art, and physical education. Students from Geary Elementary Middle School will continue to have access to the present educational programs and related services, including the continuation of a high-quality educational program, supported by specialized staff and resources for all students.

Walton Elementary Middle School

Roane County Schools will follow the latest Comprehensive Education Facilities Plan when planning and developing facility improvements at the receiving schools, Spencer Elementary School, Spencer Middle School, and Roane County High School. Each of the schools provides

adequate space and accommodations for students with special needs, and includes dedicated rooms for music, art, and physical education. Students from Walton Elementary Middle School will continue to have access to the present educational programs and related services, including the continuation of a high-quality educational program, supported by specialized staff and resources for all students.

Spencer Middle School

Walton Middle School and Geary Middle School will be joining Spencer Middle School. Spencer Middle is a brand-new building that opened for the 2024-2025 school year. Right now, the school is only being used at about 43% capacity for the 2025-2026 school year. With Walton and Geary students coming in, that number will go up to about 60%. Walton is around 21 minutes away, and Geary is about 31 minutes away. All students will still move on to Roane County High School, just like they always have.

Spencer Elementary

The latest Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan will be used in planning and developing any facility improvements at Spencer Elementary School, as a receiving school. Spencer Elementary has adequate space for students with special needs, the appropriate number of instructional classrooms, an art room, a music room, a gymnasium for physical education, and a STEAM lab for science innovation.

Both Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School students will have access to a continuation of the curriculum, specialized staffing, and specialized resources they had at their respective locations prior to consolidation. The county's fiscal responsibility will benefit the development of all these aspects and will benefit all students.

Instruction will be designed using the West Virginia College and Career Readiness Standards using specialized staff. Student support programs, along with the appropriate support staff, will continue. Instruction will be enhanced with more consistency of curriculum and high yield strategy instruction; students will have access to health care each day of the week by a fulltime LPN/aide; students will have access to mental health care each day of the week through a fulltime counselor. The Alternative Education program will be utilized consistently by the most at-risk elementary students in Roane County creating equal access for all K-2 students.

Roane County High School

The consolidation of the outlying schools will have little effect on Roane County High School. Our students will continue to receive strong core secondary school curriculum in English, mathematics, science, and social studies while also providing expanded career and technical education opportunities and electives that enable students to further explore their options and

pursue their career interests. This will enable students to further explore their options and pursue their career interests. This will enable students to build a stronger foundation for college and career readiness by embedding career exploration and career and technical education options that are integrated with core academic course requirements. Students will engage in learning opportunities where they make connections between what they are learning now and what they will learn later in high school and beyond.

Roane County Schools ensures an engaging educational environment for learners focused on teaching and learning so all students obtain a quality education. Our mission statement states that Roane County Schools empowers and educates all students for lifelong success. Along with the families of our students, we envision a future where high expectations, innovative learning, and strong community partnership empower every student to thrive. To ensure that equal opportunities for a thorough, effective, and efficient education are provided for all students, it is necessary to structure a system of curriculum and instruction that meets federal, state, and local rules and regulations. Roane County High School will meet the standards required by federal, state, and local laws and policies in regard to the research-based educational programs provided.

Roane County High School will support the Roane County Schools Early Childhood Center by providing an educational space completely separate and autonomous from the high school educational program for preschool students. The PK Core Team will follow Policy 2525 to meet the needs of the students in the Early Childhood Center. The Team will continue to monitor the implementation of Policy 2525 to ensure best practice. Roane County High School will collaborate with the Early Childhood Center for all Crisis and Safety Plans.

School Enrollments, Capacities, and Utilizations

School	Enrollment	Building Capacity	Utilization %
Closing School Geary Elementary/Middle	182	533	34.1%
Closing School Walton Elementary/Middle	199	603	33.0%
Receiving School Spencer Elementary (Projected #)	653	689	94.7%
Receiving School Spencer Middle (Projected #)	309	516	59.9%
Receiving School Roane County High School (Projected #)	567	1188	47.7%

Facilities Table 2

Source: <https://roane.sis.k12.wv.us/apps/ptl/ptl100/sso.shtml> and 2020 Roane County Schools CEF

Utilization Calculation Sheet

The supporting School Building Authority of West Virginia's (SBA) Worksheet on Building Program Utilization.

See Appendix for this Documentation

Required Services and Barrier-free Environments

Comparison of the school(s) targeted for closure or consolidation and the school(s) which the county has designated to receive the students in regard to providing the required services and barrier-free environments to students with disabilities.

Geary Elementary Middle School

No barriers were noted in the building review of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan.

Walton Elementary Middle School

No barriers were noted in the building review of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan.

Spencer Elementary School

No barriers were noted in the building review of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan.

Spencer Middle School

No barriers were noted in the building review of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan.

Roane County High School

No barriers were noted in the building review of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan.

Grade Configurations and Educational Programs

Elaboration on the effect the proposed school closing or consolidation will have on the school system's future plans regarding grade configuration, educational programs, and facility requirements.

Geary Elementary/Middle School

The existing Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan will be amended to allow for the closure of Geary Elementary/Middle School. The closure would allow for more efficient and increased dispersion of resources to areas of need.

The expanded educational programs and support services offered for students are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Educational Programs and Related Support Services.

The facility requirements to bring this facility in line with the receiving facilities are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Written Facility Condition Description.

Walton Elementary Middle School

The existing Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan will be amended to allow for the closure of Walton Elementary Middle School. The closure would allow for more efficient and increased dispersion of resources to areas of need.

The expanded educational programs and support services offered for students are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Educational Programs and Related Support Services.

The facility requirements to bring this facility in line with the receiving facilities are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Written Facility Condition Description.

Spencer Elementary School

The existing Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan will be amended to allow preschool students that were at Spencer Elementary School to move to the preschool center at Roane County High School. Thus, the grade configuration will change from PK-5 to K-5.

The expanded educational programs and support services offered for students are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Educational Programs and Related Support Services.

The facility requirements to bring this facility in line with the receiving facilities are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Written Facility Condition Description.

Spencer Middle School

The existing Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan will need no modifications for Spencer Middle School.

The expanded educational programs and support services offered for students are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Educational Programs and Related Support Services.

The facility requirements to bring this facility in line with the receiving facilities are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Written Facility Condition Description.

Roane County High School

The existing Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan will be amended to allow preschool students to attend the preschool center that is located at Roane County High School. Thus, the grade configuration will stay the same of grades 9-12 with the addition of the preschool students attending the preschool center.

The expanded educational programs and support services offered for students are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Educational Programs and Related Support Services.

The facility requirements to bring this facility in line with the receiving facilities are detailed in Section 3.2.b Facilities – Written Facility Condition Description.

Construction Work Required for the Proposed Action

Elaboration on the planned facility additions, renovations, or replacements that are required by the county to accommodate the proposed closing and consolidation.

Roane County High School

The Preschool Center at Roane County High School will require the addition of a preschool toilet in Room 27. The cost of adding this toilet is estimated to be \$700.

The Future of Closed Facilities

Elaboration on the future use or disposal of facilities designated by the county for closure.

Geary Elementary/Middle School

The intent is to sell the existing building following closure.

Walton Elementary/Middle School

The intent is to sell the existing building following closure.

School Building Authority of WV (SBA)

Identify if the proposed school closing or consolidation is contingent upon receiving funding from the SBA.

The closing of Geary Elementary/Middle School and Walton Elementary/Middle School is **not** contingent upon receiving funding from the SBA.

SBA Facility Condition Documentation

Attachment of the most recent SBA facility evaluation form for each school affected and an updated form if the most recent SBA facility evaluation form is five years old or older.

See Appendix for this Documentation

Supporting Photographs and other Documentation

Provide relevant facility photos, and any supporting documentation the county determines would be helpful. Examples of supporting documentation may include reports from architects, engineers, Fire Marshall, and insurance companies.

Due to security concerns, floor plans should only be included when necessary in the impact statement book. If floor plans are deemed valuable to the closure reasoning, consider only including them in the officially printed book that is available at the required physical locations and not in publicly available formats.

See Appendix for this Documentation

Note: Due to security concerns, floor plans are not included in the Appendix.

3.2.c. Finance

County Procedures

Itemization of Anticipated Cost and Savings

Itemization of the anticipated cost or savings the county will experience in all areas as a result of the proposed school closure or consolidation. Such itemization shall be in the form of a table indicating the following:

Closing School(s) Annual Current Cost

The current annual cost at the school(s) to be closed for:

Geary Elementary/Middle School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$105,286.30
<i>Personnel</i>	\$1,807,032.70
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$8,664.88
<i>Transportation</i>	\$44,757.49
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$1,965,741.37

Finance Table 1

Source: West Virginia Education Information System

Walton Elementary/Middle School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$103,335.65
<i>Personnel</i>	\$1,461,588.24
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$3,046.55
<i>Transportation</i>	\$44,757.49
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$1,612,727.93

Finance Table 2

Source: West Virginia Education Information System

Receiving School(s) Annual Current Cost

The current annual cost at the school(s) to be receiving for:

Spencer Elementary School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$110,072.88
<i>Personnel</i>	\$3,897,471.48
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$3,686.25
<i>Transportation</i>	\$44,757.49
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$4,055,988.10

Finance Table 3

Source: West Virginia Education Information System

Spencer Middle School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$205,413.58
<i>Personnel</i>	\$1,801,282.10
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$5,955.61
<i>Transportation</i>	\$44,757.49
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$2,057,408.78

Finance Table 4

Source: West Virginia Education Information System

Roane County High School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$243,971.20
<i>Personnel</i>	\$3,219,941.83
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$39,831.92
<i>Transportation</i>	\$44,757.49
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$3,548,502.44

Finance Table 5

Source: West Virginia Education Information System

Anticipated Annual Cost after Action

The anticipated annual cost at the school(s) to be receiving for:

*Water/sewer estimates were calculated by taking the FY25 water bills at each of the receiving schools, dividing them by the number of students enrolled in FY25, and then multiplying that amount by the number of anticipated students. Disposal estimates are based on FY 26 rates. Phone, gas, and electricity costs are based on FY25 expenses at each school.

**Anticipated personnel costs were calculated by multiplying the number of staff that would be added to each school by the Office of School Finance calculated average professional and service personnel salaries and adding the calculated fringes.

***Anticipated maintenance costs are based on FY25 expenses.

****Anticipated transportation costs were calculated by dividing the fuel costs incurred in FY25 evenly between the three receiving schools, and then adding an additional \$8,000 per school for the added costs of bringing all of the buses to Spencer each day.

Geary Elementary/Middle School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$31,585.89
<i>Personnel</i>	0
<i>Maintenance</i>	0
<i>Transportation</i>	0
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$31,585.89

*Geary Elementary/Middle School will continue to incur some costs for utilities to maintain the building until it is disposed of.

Finance Table 6

Source: West Virginia Education Information System

Walton Elementary Middle School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$31,000.70
<i>Personnel</i>	0
<i>Maintenance</i>	0
<i>Transportation</i>	0
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$31,000.70

*Walton Elementary/Middle School will continue to incur some costs for utilities to maintain the building until it is disposed of.

Finance Table 7

Source: West Virginia Education Information System

Spencer Elementary School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$121,844.07

<i>Personnel</i>	\$4,654,719.47
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$3,686.25
<i>Transportation</i>	\$82,595.81
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$4,862,845.60

Finance Table 8

Source: West Virginia Education Information System, OSF Average of Professional Personnel Salary and Average of Service Personnel Salary Schedules

Spencer Middle School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$205,863.47
<i>Personnel</i>	\$2,449,183.05
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$5,955.61
<i>Transportation</i>	\$82,595.81
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$2,743,597.94

Finance Table 9

Source: West Virginia Education Information System, OSF Average of Professional Personnel Salary and Average of Service Personnel Salary Schedules

Roane County High School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$261,374.46
<i>Personnel</i>	\$3,735,105.43
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$39,831.92
<i>Transportation</i>	\$82,595.81
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Total</i>	\$4,118,907.62

Finance Table 10

Source: West Virginia Education Information System, OSF Average of Professional Personnel Salary and Average of Service Personnel Salary Schedules

Net Cost or Savings

The net cost or savings of the school(s) to be closed and the school(s) designated by the county to be receiving students for:

Geary Elementary Middle School, Walton Elementary Middle School, Spencer Elementary School, Spencer Middle School, Roane County High School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost or Savings</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	Savings	\$116,411.02
<i>Personnel</i>	Savings	\$1,348,308.40
<i>Maintenance</i>	Savings	\$11,711.43
<i>Transportation</i>	Cost	-\$23,999.98
<i>Other</i>	No Change	0
<i>Total</i>	Savings	\$1,452,430.87

Finance Table 11

Anticipated Construction Cost to Accommodate Action

Cost of any renovation or addition resulting from the proposed school closure or consolidation, including all proposed funding sources.

Roane County High School

The Preschool Center at Roane County High School will require the addition of a preschool toilet in Room 27. The cost of adding this toilet is estimated to be \$700.

County Expense Fund History

Five-year history of the county's unrestricted general current expense fund balance and that balance as a percentage of the county's approved levy estimate.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Unrestricted General Current Expense Fund Balance</i>	<i>Approved Levy Estimate</i>	<i>Percentage of Approved Levy Estimate</i>
2025	Not Currently Available	Not Currently Available	Not Currently Available
2024	\$30,067	\$19,288,681	0.2%
2023	\$969,335	\$17,904,271	5.4%
2022	\$1,453,153	\$17,861,817	8.1%
2021	\$1,791,765	\$18,633,896	9.6%
2020	\$1,429,723	\$19,542,150	7.3%

Finance Table 12

Source: Office of School Finance Financial Analysis – County Boards of Education Unrestricted Fund Balances with Adjustments – Audited General Current Expense Fund

3.2.d. Personnel

County Procedures

Analysis of Anticipated Personnel Changes

An analysis of the effect the proposed school closure or consolidation will have on professional and service personnel. The analysis shall include, at a minimum, the following data regarding the anticipated increases or decreases in employment as a result of this proposed closure or consolidation:

The Roane County Board of Education has made consistent efforts over the past decade to adjust staffing levels in response to declining student enrollment, in accordance with West Virginia Code §18A and state personnel formulas. The proposed school closure and consolidation will support further alignment with these staffing requirements and is projected to result in a reduction of approximately 12 professional and 16 service personnel positions.

This action is being taken with the goal of improving educational outcomes by increasing the likelihood that all students will be taught by certified and highly qualified teachers, in accordance with state guidelines. While personnel reductions may occur due to the elimination of duplicate positions following the merger, Roane County Schools will continue to employ the necessary number of staff to fully implement the educational programs offered to students.

All staffing decisions will be made in compliance with applicable state laws and the West Virginia Department of Education's recommendations, and efforts will be made to minimize adverse impacts on current employees whenever possible.

Current School Totals

Geary Elementary Middle – Current Before Proposed Action -CLOSING					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	1	14.5*	0.5	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	2	5	2	1	1

*One teacher is funded through a Scaled to Success Grant and one teacher is funded through federal Title 1 funds, not county-funded employee.

Current Personnel Table 2

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Walton Elementary Middle – Current Before Proposed Action - CLOSING

Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>total number of professional personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	1	16.5*	0.5	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodian	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>total number of service personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	2	3*	2	1	1

Current Personnel Table 5

One teacher is paid through the Scaled to Success Grant, one aide is funded by Head Start, and one teacher is paid through federal funds not county-funded position.

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Spencer Elementary– Current Before Proposed Action - RECEIVING					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	2	37*	2*	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	5	15*	2	1	1

Current Personnel Table 3

One teacher is paid through the Communities in School Grant, one teacher and one counselor are paid through the Elementary Alternative School Grant, one aide is funded through Head Start, two aides are reimbursed through Head Start, and three teachers are paid through Title 1 federal funds, not county-funded employee.

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Spencer Middle – Current Before Proposed Action - RECEIVING					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>total number of professional personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	1	19*	1	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>total number of service personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	3	2	2	1.5	1

Current Personnel Table 4

One teacher is paid through the Communities in Schools Grant, and two teaching positions are paid through federal funds, not county-funded positions.

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Roane County High– Current Before Proposed Action - RECEIVING				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse

<i>total number of professional personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	2	31*	1	1	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>total number of service personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	4	1	4	1.5	0

Current Personnel Table 6

One teacher is paid through the Communities in Schools Grant, not county-funded position.

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

CURRENT GRAND TOTAL- ALL SCHOOLS

Geary Elementary Middle, Spencer Elementary, Walton Elementary Middle, Spencer Middle, Roane County High- Current School Personnel Data Chart					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	7	118	5	1	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	16	26	12	6	4

Current Personnel Table 1

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

TOTALS AFTER ACTION

Geary Elementary Middle – Anticipated After Proposed Action					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>total number of professional personnel who are anticipated to be employed at the affected school(s) upon the completion of the closure or consolidation;</i>	-1	-14.5	-0.5	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodian	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>total number of service personnel who are anticipated to be employed at the affected school(s) upon the completion of the closure or consolidation;</i>	-2	-5	-2	-1	-1

Anticipated Personnel Table 1

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Walton Elementary Middle- Anticipated After Proposed Action				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse
<i>the anticipated net change in professional personnel due to</i>	-1	-16.5	-0.5	0

<i>the proposed closure or consolidation</i>					
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>the anticipated net change in service personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	-2	-3	-2	-1	-1

Anticipated Personnel Table 4

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Spencer Elementary– Anticipated After Proposed Action					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>total number of professional personnel who are anticipated to be employed at the affected school(s) upon the completion of the closure or consolidation;</i>	2	48*	2*	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>total number of service personnel who are anticipated to be employed at the affected school(s) upon the completion of the closure or consolidation;</i>	5	12	3	1	1

Anticipated Personnel Table 2

*Number of Personnel reflect future enrollment. Four teaching positions are based on federal funding and one teaching position is funded through the Community in School Grant. One teacher and one counselor are funded through the Elementary Alternative School Grant.

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Spencer Middle– Anticipated After Proposed Action					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>the anticipated net change in professional personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	2	25*	1	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>the anticipated net change in service personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	4	2	3	1.5	1

Anticipated Personnel Table 3

* Number of Personnel reflects future enrollment. Two teaching positions are based on federal funding and one teaching position is funded through the Community in School Grant.

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Roane County High – Anticipated After Proposed Action				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse

<i>the anticipated net change in professional personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	2	35*	1	1
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>the anticipated net change in service personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	4	5*	4	1.5

Anticipated Personnel Table 5

*Number of Personnel reflect future enrollment. Preschool teachers and aides are included in the teacher and aide numbers.

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

GRAND TOTAL NET CHANGE FOR ACTION ALL SCHOOLS

Geary Elementary Middle, Walton Elementary Middle, Spencer Elementary, Roane County High-- Anticipated Total Change Chart					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	
<i>decrease that will occur through a reduction in force</i>	-1	-10*	-1	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>decrease that will occur through reduction in force</i>	-3	-7	-2	-2	-2

Attrition/Reduction Personnel Table 5

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

*This number includes one interventionist paid through federal funds and 2 teachers paid through Scaled to Success Grant, not county-funded positions.

ATTRITION AND REDUCTION SUMMARY FOR CLOSING SCHOOLS

Geary Elementary Middle-- Attrition and Reduction in Force Summary - Professional					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	
<i>decrease that will occur through a reduction in force</i>	0	-5	-0.5	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>decrease that will occur through reduction in force</i>	-1.5	-3.5	-1	-1	-1

Attrition/Reduction Personnel Table 1

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

Walton Elementary Middle-- Attrition and Reduction in Force Summary - Professional				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse

<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	
<i>decrease that will occur through a reduction in force</i>	-1	-5	-0.5	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>decrease that will occur through reduction in force</i>	-1.5	-3.5	-1	-1	-1

Attrition/Reduction Personnel Table 3

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

TOTAL ATTRITION AND REDUCTION IN FORCE SUMMARY FOR CLOSINGS SCHOOLS

Geary and Walton Attrition and Reduction in Force Summary					
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse	
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	
<i>decrease that will occur through a reduction in force</i>	-1	-10	-1	0	
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary	Nurse/Aide
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>decrease that will occur through reduction in force</i>	-3	-7	-2	-2	-2

Attrition/Reduction Personnel Table 4

Source: West Virginia Educational Information System

3.2.e. Student Transportation

County Procedures

Analysis of Anticipated Transportation Time Changes

Explain any variances of W. Va. 126CSR92, Policy 4336, West Virginia School Bus Transportation Regulations, Procedures, and Specifications for the Design and Equipment of School Buses (Policy 4336), section 15, Guidelines for Bus Routing, and the effects the variances may have on transportation. Provide the following bus route data and travel times:

Current and Differences of Travel Times

List the current travel time by bus route for students in the communities of the schools planned for closure or consolidation and the estimated increase or decrease in travel time as a result of the closure; and

Geary Elementary/Middle School

<i>Route</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Current Travel Time</i>	<i>Estimated Time after Closure or Consolidation</i>	<i>Net Increase or Decrease</i>
Route 01-16 (Route Modified)	Thorofare/Little Left Hand/Vineyard Ridge/Route 36	80 Min	57 Min	Decreased 23 Min
Route 5-12 Handicap (New Route)	Pigeon/Big Sandy/Route 36	n/a	59 Min	n/a
Route 13-21 (Route Modified)	Pigeon/Amma	65 Min	55 Min	Decreased 10 Min
Route 32-15 (Route Modified)	Uler	75 Min	55 Min	Decreased 20 Min
Route 49-24 (Route Modified)	Grannies Creek/Route 36	65	57 Min	Decreased 8 Min
Route 56-19 (Route Modified)	Tariff/Linden/Canoe Run	55 Min	55 Min	Same

Transportation Table 1

Source: Roane County Schools 2025-2026 Bus Routes

Walton Elementary/Middle School

<i>Route</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Current Travel Time</i>	<i>Estimated Time after Closure or Consolidation</i>	<i>Net Increase or Decrease</i>
Route 06-16 (Route Modified)	Cicerone/Ambler Ridge	50 Min	55 Min	Increased 5 Min
Route 14-21 (Route Modified)	Jones Ridge/Vicars Ridge/Harmony	85 Min	55 Min	Decreased 30 Min

Route 18-24 (Route Modified)	Clio/Amma	85 Min	55 Min	Decreased 30 Min
Route 21-14 (Route Modified)	Long Ridge/Johnson Creek	40 Min	57 Min	Increased 17 Min
Route 28-22 Handicap	Cottontree/Long Ridge/Route 119	57 Min	57 Min	Same
Route 43-18 (Route Modified)	Gabe/Cottontree	35 Min	57 Min	Increased 22 Min
Route 55-19	Robinson Run/McKown Creek/River Road	40 Min	55 Min	Same

Transportation Table 2

Source: Roane County Schools 2025-2026 Bus Routes

Spencer Elementary School

<i>Route</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Current Travel Time</i>	<i>Estimated Time after Closure or Consolidation</i>	<i>Net Increase or Decrease</i>
Route 04-25 Handicap (Route Modified)	Linden/Otto/Spencer	85 Min	59 Min	Decreased 26 Min
Route 10-13 (Route Modified)	Liverpool/Cain Run/Route 14	63 Min	57 Min	Decreased 6 Min
Route 12-25	Boggs Fork/Steel Hollow/Route 33	57 Min	57 Min	Same
Route 15-21 (Route Modified)	Missouri Fork/Lick Fork/Route 14	65 Min	57 Min	Decreased 8 Min
Route 19-24 (Route Modified)	Flat Fork/Poca Road/Route 36	65 Min	57 Min	Decreased 8 Min
Route 20-18 Handicap	John Boggs/Spring Creek/Windyville	59 Min	59 Min	Same
Route 22-20 (Route Modified)	Vandale Fork/Otto/Clover/Slate	90 Min	57 Min	Decreased 33 Min
Route 23-20	Egypt Ridge/Triplett/Bowman	53 Min	53 Min	Same
Route 24-16	Stover Fork/Reedyville/Route 14/Green Acres	53 Min	53 Min	Same

Route 29-22 (Route Modified)	Grace/Barrcut/Toms Run/Peters Cave/John Boggs/Oak Drive	80 Min	57 Min	Decreased 23 Min
Route 42-24	Stringtown/Slab Fork/Speed/Route 119/ COA	55 Min	55 Min	Same
Route 44-24 (Route Modified)	Seamon Fork/Middle Fork/Tuckers Run/ PVB	63 Min	57 Min	Decreased 6 Min
Route 45-24	Windyville/Colt Ridge/ Spring Creek/Nancy Run	57 Min	57 Min	Same
Route 50-15	Elk Fork/Cox Fork/ Harmony/Cabbage Fork/Route 119	55 Min	55 Min	Same
Route 58-15 (Route Modified)	Peniel Road/Old Route 33	65 Min	57 Min	Decrease 8 Min

Transportation Table 3

Source: Roane County Schools 2025-2026 Bus Routes

Anticipated Routes and Waiver Requests

List all anticipated bus routes after the proposed closure or consolidation with the estimated total one-way travel time for each route. Clearly identify any bus routes that exceed the recommended travel times and any routes which will require a waiver of Policy 4336.

Geary Elementary/Middle School

<i>Route</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>One-way Travel Time</i>	<i>Amount Exceeding Recommended Travel Times</i>	<i>Is a Waiver of WV 126CSR92, Policy 4336 Required (Yes / no)*</i>
Route 01-16 (Route Modified)	Thorofare/Little Left Hand/Vineyard Ridge/Route 36	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 5-12 Handicap (New Route)	Pigeon/Big Sandy/Route 36	59 Min	29 Min	Yes
Route 13-21 (Route Modified)	Pigeon/Amma	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Route 32-15 (Route Modified)	Uler	55 Min	25 Min	Yes

Route 49-24 (Route Modified)	Grannies Creek/Route 36	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 56-19 (Route Modified)	Tariff/Linden/ Canoe Run	55 Min	25 Min	Yes

Transportation Table 4

Source: Roane County Schools 2026-2027 Bus Routes

Walton Elementary/Middle School

<i>Route</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>One-way Travel Time</i>	<i>Amount Exceeding Recommended Travel Times</i>	<i>Is a Waiver of WV 126CSR92, Policy 4336 Required (Yes / no)*</i>
Route 06-16 (Route Modified)	Cicerone/Ambler Ridge	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Route 14-21 (Route Modified)	Jones Ridge/Vicars Ridge/Harmony	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Route 18-24 (Route Modified)	Clio/Amma	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Route 21-14 (Route Modified)	Long Ridge/Johnson Creek	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 28-22 Handicap	Cottontree/Long Ridge/Route 119	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 43-18 (Route Modified)	Gabe/Cottontree	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 55-19	Robinson Run/McKown Creek/River Road	55 Min	25 Min	Yes

Transportation Table 5

Source: Roane County Schools 2026-2027 Bus Routes

Spencer Elementary School

<i>Route</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>One-way Travel Time</i>	<i>Amount Exceeding Recommended Travel Times</i>	<i>Is a Waiver of WV 126CSR92, Policy 4336 Required (Yes / no)*</i>
Route 04-25 Handicap (Route Modified)	Linden/Otto/Spencer	59 Min	29 Min	Yes
Route 10-13 (Route Modified)	Liverpool/Cain Run/Route 14	57 Min	27 Min	Yes

Route 12-25	Boggs Fork/Steel Hollow/Route 33	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 15-21 (Route Modified)	Missouri Fork/Lick Fork/Route 14	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 19-24 (Route Modified)	Flat Fork/Poca Road/Route 36	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 20-18 Handicap	John Boggs/Spring Creek/Windyville	59 Min	29 Min	Yes
Route 22-20 (Route Modified)	Vandale Fork/Otto/Clover/Slate	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 23-20	Egypt Ridge/Triplett/Bowman	53 Min	23 Min	Yes
Route 24-16	Stover Fork/Reedyville/Route 14/Green Acres	53 Min	23 Min	Yes
Route 29-22 (Route Modified)	Grace/Barrcut/Toms Run/Peters Cave/John Boggs/Oak Drive	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 42-24	Stringtown/Slab Fork/Speed/Route 119/COA	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Route 44-24 (Route Modified)	Seamon Fork/Middle Fork/Tuckers Run/PVB	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 45-24	Windyville/Colt Ridge/Spring Creek/Nancy Run	57 Min	27 Min	Yes
Route 50-15	Elk Fork/Cox Fork/Harmony/Cabbage Fork/Route 119	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Route 58-15 (Route Modified)	Peniel Road/Old Route 33	57 Min	27 Min	Yes

Transportation Table 6

Source: Roane County Schools 2026-2027 Bus Routes

*A waiver of WVBE Policy 4336 is only required for elementary school routes that have a one-way transportation time greater than 45 minutes.

Travel Time to Neighboring County Public School

Identify and provide the travel time to any neighboring county public schools that could serve the population of the closing school(s) where travel time to the identified out-of-county school is less than or equal to the school(s) designated by the county to receive students.

Geary Elementary/Middle School

Students living south of 8700 Clay Road (WV Route 36) will have a shorter travel time to either Big Otter Elementary School, Clay County High School, Clendenin Elementary School, Elkview

Middle School and/or Herbert Hoover High School. Travel time from this area would be 25 minutes or less depending on where a student lived south of this area.

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>

Walton Elementary/Middle School

Students living south of 7600 Charleston Road (US Route 119) will have a shorter travel time to either Clendenin Elementary School, Elkview Middle School and/or Herbert Hoover High School. Travel time from this area would be 25 minutes or less depending on where a student lived south of this area.

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps>

3.2.f. Student Educational Program

County Procedures

Analysis and Assurance of Consideration

Complete a projected educational program improvement analysis which includes a statement of assurance that the following have been considered:

Geary Elementary Middle School

The closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and consolidation into Spencer Elementary and Spencer Middle School will meet the required standards of local, state, and federal policies regarding the education programs that are provided. As a result of the closure, kindergarten through fifth grade students will attend Spencer Elementary and sixth through eighth grade students will attend Spencer Middle School. This transition will ease anxiety and increase unity as students will attend pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade with the same group of students. Students will attend Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and Roane County High School, which are all appropriate for their respective grade bands, and are supportive and inclusive environments. Students will receive rigorous, standards-based instruction, and will be housed in safe and healthy environments. We believe the Roane County Schools can meet the instructional, emotional, and social needs of all learners.

The consolidation will ensure that teachers at each grade level will have regular collaboration with level teams through Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, providing them the opportunity as a group to review student data and make instructional decisions that will result in increased student achievement. Opportunities will exist for grade level and vertical team meetings which will allow for focused discussions on student growth and achievement. Federal, state, and local laws and policies will be followed to ensure appropriate education for all students. Amid the closure and consolidation, these efforts ensure that students continue their education seamlessly, with strong support for both academic and personal growth.

Students will continue to have access to high-quality curriculum and instruction, specialized staff, and student support resources including a full-time counselor and nurse, all of which help to ensure that students receive the instruction and support they need.

Walton Elementary Middle School

With the consolidation into SES and SMS, our students will continue their education with strong core curriculum in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies while highlighting technology and computer science, while meeting the required standards set forth by federal, state, and local policies. In addition, WEMS students will continue to cultivate a strong foundation in preparation for higher education after high school with enhanced opportunities for visual and performing arts, supported by access to an auditorium, health and wellness, physical education, and world language. Studies show that pooling resources and funding allows schools to offer more diverse academic and extracurricular programs, resulting in a richer curriculum for students. It also allows for greater financial efficiency, reducing per-pupil costs by sharing facilities, staff, and programs across the larger, combined district.

The consolidation will ensure that teachers at each grade level will have regular collaboration with level teams through Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, providing them the opportunity as a group to review student data and make instructional decisions that will result in increased student achievement. Opportunities will exist for grade level and vertical team meetings which will allow for focused discussions on student growth and achievement. Federal, state, and local laws and policies will be followed to ensure appropriate education for all students. Amid the closure and consolidation, these efforts ensure that students continue their education seamlessly, with strong support for both academic and personal growth.

Students will continue to have access to high-quality curriculum and instruction, specialized staff, and student support resources including a full-time counselor and nurse, all of which help to ensure that students receive the instruction and support they need.

Spencer Middle School

Spencer Middle School is committed to providing a safe and engaging educational environment where teaching and learning remain the highest priority. Our mission is Supportive, Motivated, and Successful; together we grow, learn, and achieve. Working together with families, our vision is: We thrive to inspire learners who are prepared to work collaboratively and cooperatively, be socially responsible, accepting of differences, and involved, accountable members of their community.

We believe that excellence in education can be achieved through skilled instruction, innovative school programs, meaningful opportunities for students to demonstrate their talents, effective support for student behavior, a wide range of support services, and the development of college and career readiness skills. Roane County Schools is committed to meeting the instructional, social, emotional, and technological needs of all students. To provide equal opportunities for every child, our system is structured to meet all federal, state, and local requirements for curriculum and instruction.

The closure of Walton Middle School and Geary Middle School, and the consolidation of all middle school students into Spencer Middle School, will align with these standards and strengthen the educational experience for our students. By uniting students from across the county into one middle school, we can create a consistent and equitable learning environment where all children receive the same level of support, opportunity, and access to programs.

At Spencer Middle School, students will have access to a broader range of academic and extracurricular opportunities. A larger staff allows for expanded course offerings, additional academic support, and enrichment programs that may not have been available in smaller schools. Students will also benefit from a full range of extracurricular activities; including athletics and the arts supported by greater participation numbers and resources.

This consolidation will also make it possible to use district resources more effectively. By focusing staffing, funding, and support services in one location, we can ensure that students have access to updated facilities, improved technology, and stronger student services. This provides a

more consistent and higher-quality learning environment for all middle school students in Roane County.

In addition, uniting all middle school students at Spencer Middle strengthens connections across the county. Students will build relationships earlier with peers who will later join them at Roane County High School. Families will come together through shared events and activities, creating a stronger county-wide school community. Teachers and staff will also benefit from collaboration, as working together in one building provides greater opportunities to share ideas, strengthen instruction, and provide well-rounded support to every student.

Through this consolidation, Spencer Middle School will provide students with a strong academic foundation, expanded extracurricular and enrichment opportunities, and a unified school community. These changes will help prepare our students for success in high school, college, careers, and beyond, while ensuring that every child has access to the highest quality education possible.

Spencer Elementary

Spencer Elementary School is committed to providing a safe and engaging educational environment where teaching and learning are the top priorities. Through the mission, Spencer Elementary will foster a safe and creative environment that allows all students to grow their potential by developing their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive well-being; cultivating lifelong learners.

The closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School and the subsequent consolidation of students in kindergarten through fifth grade into existing Spencer Elementary School will allow for a more cohesive approach to elementary education. High-quality instruction, using the WV Career and Content Standards, will develop engaging instructional units and lessons. Additionally, this consolidated school will continue to be served by RCS's SOAR 21st Century Grant.

At Spencer Elementary School, students receiving special education services will continue to benefit from individualized services. The close proximity to Roane General Hospital and RC's Office of Student Services will benefit all students.

School will meet the standards required by federal, state, and local laws and policies regarding the educational programs provided. This consolidation will allow all Spencer Elementary students to continue to receive or begin receiving services they did at their former schools. Students will have a seamless integration of a strong core elementary curriculum in English, mathematics, science, and social studies along with art, music, and wellness while embedding career exploration and digital literacy, and technology.

Spencer Elementary students will continue to cultivate the supportive relationships they have developed with their peers and adults in their former buildings. Through the school's Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS), the students' social and emotional wellness will be nurtured. Additionally, the county's Alternative Educational classroom is housed at this school. A consolidation of elementary schools in the county will create a consistent and unified immersion in this program.

This consolidation will provide opportunities for increased effective teacher collaboration and consistency of curriculum through common planning and vertical teaming, both of which will assist with meeting and exceeding growth targets in response to student needs. Instructional programming such as a school-wide Walk-to-Intervention and classroom differentiated instruction will enhance all students' access to appropriate, skill based 'just in time' learning. Through schoolwide professional development and professional learning communities, teachers will develop and provide high quality instruction.

Though the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan and in order to ensure that equal educational opportunities for a thorough, effective, and efficient education are provided for all the students, it is necessary to structure a consolidated system of curriculum and instruction that meets all federal, state, and local rules and regulations.

Roane County High School

The consolidation of the outlying schools will have little effect on the educational program of Roane County High School. Our students will continue to receive strong core secondary school curriculum in English, mathematics, science, and social studies while also providing expanded career and technical education opportunities and electives that enable students to further explore their options and pursue their career interests. This will enable students to further explore their options and pursue their career interests. This will enable students to build a stronger foundation for college and career readiness by embedding career exploration and career and technical education options that are integrated with core academic course requirements. Students will engage in learning opportunities where they make connections between what they are learning now and what they will learn later in high school and beyond.

Roane County Schools ensures an engaging educational environment for learners focused on teaching and learning so all students obtain a quality education. Our mission statement states that Roane County Schools empowers and educates all students for lifelong success. Along with the families of our students, we envision a future where high expectations, innovative learning, and strong community partnership empower every student to thrive. To ensure that equal opportunities for a thorough, effective, and efficient education are provided for all students, it is necessary to structure a system of curriculum and instruction that meets federal, state, and local rules and regulations. Roane County High School will meet the standards required by federal, state, and local laws and policies in regard to the research-based educational programs provided.

Roane County High School will support the Roane County Schools Early Childhood Center by providing an educational space separate and autonomous from the high school educational program for preschool students. The PK Core Team will follow Policy 2525 to meet the needs of the students in the Early Childhood Center. The Team will continue to monitor the implementation of Policy 2525 to ensure best practice. Roane County High School will collaborate with the Early Childhood Center for all Crisis and Safety Plans.

Having the Early Childhood Center in the Roane County High School facility will offer our students additional opportunities for their future interests. We will be able to implement a mentoring program as well as offer Grow Your Own opportunities. This will enable students to further explore their options and pursue their career interests.

In the preparation of the documents regarding the closure and/or consolidation of the above referenced school, the following codes and policies have been considered:

- ☒ W. Va. 126CSR16, Policy 2419, Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities,
- ☒ W. Va. 126CSR42, Policy 2510, Assuring the Quality of Education: Regulations for Education Programs,
- ☒ W. Va. 126CSR44 et al., Policy 2520, Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools,
- ☒ W. Va. 126CSR172 Policy 6200- Handbook on Planning School Facilities,
- ☒ Policy 6204-School Closings or Consolidations



Superintendent

9.23.2025
Date:

Pages requiring signatures may be printed, signed, and inserted in the appendix section of this document.

3.2.g. Community

An impact statement regarding the effect the proposed school closure or consolidation will have on the affected communities and their students. Where schools and their respective communities are all defined by their own unique relationships, each proposed action will result in varying types and degrees of community impact. To better understand this diverse relational dynamic, the impact statement shall describe:

1. The known relationships that exist among the affected schools and their communities.

Geary Elementary Middle School has a long-standing role in the community, often being the location where many community events take place. The school is often used as a recreational space for the students and community. The building has been used for youth basketball. The community holds a 4th of July celebration each year at the school. Often, families will bring their children to the school playground after hours for recreation. Roane County Public Library - Geary branch and Roane General Medical Clinic are adjacent to the property and serve the students throughout the school year.

Walton Elementary Middle School has formed many strong relationships with the community. The Walton Alumni Association holds events and reunions at the school. The school is often used as a recreational space for the students and community. The building has been used for youth basketball, as well as a CWVAC tournament location for a variety of sports. The Walton Alumni Association has a building on the property to hold these events and reunions. Poca Valley Bank, Roane County Public Library – Walton branch, Walton Mercantile and Hardware, Walton Medical Clinic are close locations that are frequented during the school day and provide support for the school in a variety of ways. There are community businesses and businesses further from the center of Walton that also support the school as community partners throughout the year, including Walton Rebekah Lodge, Mt. Welcome Union Church, Lighthouse Ministries, Walton Union Church, Mountain Market, private anonymous businesses, and individuals.

Spencer Elementary School has several strong relationships with the community and businesses within the community. Like the other schools, the school and its property are often used for extracurricular events, including youth basketball and 4-H meetings/events. The community supports the many efforts of the school to enhance the education of the students with partnerships. Spencer Elementary has strong relationships with Roane General Hospital, Hardman's, the Roane County Library, and both local banks. Being the largest school in the county, many individuals visit the school campus every day. Many civic/community organizations partner with Spencer Elementary in outreach programs. These programs include: the backpack program, clothing and shoe drives, weekend dinner bags, oral health programs, and healthy eating educational lessons.

In support of the school's mission which states "We commit ourselves to building meaningful relationships with the families we serve and the community we represent", Spencer Elementary hosts many after hour events that are open to SES families and/or the general public throughout the school year. Examples of the events include, Grandparents' Program, SES/RCHS football homecoming tailgate, Bingo for Books, Howl-o-ween Dog Show, Veterans Day Program, Christmas Concert, Literacy Night, and the Country Fair.

Spencer Middle School continues to build strong relationships with the community. Known relationships within the community are with our community businesses and organizations that support our students. Many events take place at the High School/Middle School complex on

Raider Way. Having two buildings provides additional space and opportunities. Other community relationships include PATCH, youth basketball, Family Healthcare, FNB, People's Bank, and Gino's.

Roane County High School has strong relationships with most of Roane County in a variety of capacities. An example would be our LSIC members from First Neighborhood bank and Armacell. Several community businesses work with our sports teams.

The community will often use many of the facilities for events such as the Black Walnut Festival pageant, FFA/4-H events, youth basketball and football, and community events such as softball tournaments.

2. How the existing known relationships could be impacted by the proposed action.

The existing relationship between Geary Elementary Middle School and its community could be affected by closure because the community utilizes the building and facilities for events. Closure may cause the building to no longer be available for the community for gatherings and events.

Walton Elementary Middle School is in the unincorporated city of Walton, WV in the foothills of West Virginia where the local community pours a great deal of resources and expertise to the school. Our community partners include the Poca Valley Bank, Walton Mercantile and Hardware, Aux Energy, and various local churches such as Mt. Welcome Church, Lighthouse Ministries and Walton Union Church. Walton Rebekah Lodge, Mountain Market, private (anonymous) business, individuals, Walton Medical Clinic and Walton Public Library. While these entities have great heart to support the school, the total number of tangible and intellectual resources are limited. The community could be affected by the loss of a community building in which they hold activities and events. The businesses could be affected by the loss of interactions and transactions with the school staff, students and parents. The closure of the school could also negatively affect the Walton Medical Clinic, a resource for students and families. The known relationships for Spencer Elementary School should be impacted in a positive manner with the consolidation. The strong community relationships that we have built relationships with welcome every child in our school and this will provide an opportunity to impact additional students, families, staff and community members within the district.

The consolidation of plan will bring students from Walton, Geary, and Spencer together earlier in their school years. While this means the individual school identities of Walton and Geary will no longer be as visible, it also allows those existing bonds to grow into broader county-wide connections while students are at Spencer Middle School. Families who were once connected primarily through their local schools will now share experiences together at Spencer Middle, supporting their children and building a larger network of support. There should be a continued positive impact between the school and community relationships with more students being affected by the current positive relationships.

Having the Early Childhood Center in the Roane County High School facility will offer our students additional opportunities for their future interests. We will be able to implement a mentoring program as well as offer Grow Your Own opportunities. This will enable students to further explore their options and pursue their career interests. As a result of housing the Early

Childhood Center, the Roane County High School facility will be able to increase the building utilization. The community impact could build stronger relationships between the school and the community.

3. The potential for new relationships that could be developed under the proposed action.

With the closure of Geary Elementary Middle School, new relationships could be developed. Geary Elementary Middle School is in a rural area, currently 21 miles from Roane County High School and facilities located in Spencer, WV. Geary Elementary Middle students already travel to Spencer for sports and events that are not currently available at Geary Elementary Middle, which can cause strains in existing relationships. The proposed closure could strengthen relationships as students would spend their entire education from Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade with the same group of students, all in Spencer, WV.

Spencer Elementary and Spencer Middle are in the corporate town of Spencer WV, the county seat. The school has many resources which would be afforded to the students from Walton Elementary Middle after consolidation. With the consolidation of Walton with Spencer Elementary and Spencer Middle students, there would be the potential for new relationships that could be developed among families and business members. New relationships could be cultivated with consolidation while reducing the number of schools the community is trying to support. The resources in Spencer and Walton could be blended, allowing the students to directly benefit from rich educational experiences, greater access to suburban health care and programs to support every facet of productive living.

With the consolidation of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School into Spencer Elementary School, all students could have new relationships that will be formed with staff, students, parents and community members. SES could reach out to the community members that currently have relationships with GEMS and WEMS to build new working relationships that will benefit the education of all students, while introducing the students and families to the community partners at SES. These relationships should continue to build throughout the students' years in Roane County Schools as the students move on to middle school and high school.

By uniting all 6-8 students into Spencer Middle School, students will have more opportunities to interact through classes, clubs, sports, and activities, strengthening friendships and peer connections before high school. Concentrating resources in one location will provide improved facilities, technology, and support services, ensuring a more consistent learning environment and the opportunity for expanding community connections. A larger middle school community will also open the door to new extracurricular programs that smaller schools could not sustain. Students, families, staff and communities will form new connections, and together, the larger student body will help build a stronger sense of county-wide pride and school spirit that carries into Roane County High School.

Following the closure of Walton Elementary School and Geary Elementary School, new relationships could be formed, through educational, athletic, and community programs. Students transitioning to a different school will benefit from existing programs, sports, and afterschool opportunities. Having the Early Childhood Center in the Roane County High School facility will

offer our students additional opportunities for their future interests. We will be able to implement a mentoring program as well as offer Grow Your Own opportunities. This will enable students to further explore their options and pursue their career interests through community partnerships and potentially return to pursue their careers locally.

3.3. & 3.4. Public Notices and Hearings

County Procedures

Notice of Public Hearing(s)

The county must provide notice for all public hearing(s) required by section 3.4.a.1. All public hearing notices shall be advertised through a Class III legal advertisement for three weeks prior to the date of the hearing in a newspaper in general circulation in the locality of any school to be closed or consolidated and in the locality of any school that has been designated by the county to receive students from the schools to be closed or consolidated. The notice also shall be posted in all schools as provided in section 3.3.5 at least 30 days prior to the date of hearing.

Section 3.3 of WVBE Policy 6204 contains the requirements for the public hearing notice.

A copy of the notice shall be posted at all schools, bus garages, and maintenance areas in the county in conspicuous working areas, for all professional and service personnel to observe.

If the county will be applying for SBA funding, the procedures must be completed before the SBA will consider a project for funding, as further outlined in section 6. If the county will be utilizing local funding for a construction project related to the closure or consolidation, the procedures must be completed prior to the initiation of construction. For all other closures and consolidations, counties must complete the procedures on or before December 31st of the calendar year prior to the calendar year in which the closures or consolidations are to be effective.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

**PROPOSED CLOSURE OF GEARY AND WALTON ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOLS
AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THEIR GRADES K-5 INTO SPENCER ELEMENTARY,
AND THEIR GRADES 6-8 INTO SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THE
CONSOLIDATION OF PRE-K STUDENTS FROM ALL SCHOOLS INTO THE TO THE
SPACE NOW OCCUPIED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AT
ROANE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

ROANE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Roane County Board of Education will hold five public hearings on the Superintendent's recommendation to close Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools at the end of the 2025-26 school year, and consolidate their K-5 students into Spencer Elementary and their 6-8 grade students into Spencer Middle School, and consolidate all Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services located at Roane County High School. Public hearings will be held at the following locations, dates, and times listed below:

- LOCATION: WALTON ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOL, 90 School Drive, Walton, WV 25286
DATE AND TIME: Monday, October 27, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
- LOCATION: GEARY ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOL, 9538 Clay Rd, Lefthand, WV 25251
DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
- LOCATION: SPENCER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 85 Clay Road, Spencer, WV, 25276
DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
- LOCATION: SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL, 2 Raider Way, Spencer, WV 25276
DATE AND TIME: Monday, November 3, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
- LOCATION: ROANE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, 1 Raider Way, Spencer, WV 25276
DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

If, at the time a hearing is called to order, the Board determines that the location is of insufficient size to accommodate all who desire to attend, the hearing will be recessed and moved to a new location of sufficient size to accommodate all those who desire to attend. If that happens, the new meeting location will be posted at the original meeting location.

If a public hearing is not completed by 11:00 p.m., it will be recessed, to be continued on a date and a time designated and announced by the Board just prior to the hearing recess, to be continued day-to-day until concluded. The public hearings, as well as any reconvened session of the public hearings, shall end at the conclusion of each hearing's business or at 11:00 p.m., whichever occurs earlier.

ALTERNATE DATES AND TIMES

If, due to inclement weather or other cause, any hearing cannot be held on the scheduled date, the hearing will be held at the same location as originally scheduled, but on the following dates and times:

- Walton Elementary Middle School, Thursday, October 30, 2025, beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- Geary Elementary Middle School, Saturday, November 1, 2025 beginning at 9:00 a.m.
- Spencer Elementary School, Saturday, November 1, 2025 beginning at 5:00 p.m.

- Spencer Middle School, Wednesday, November 5, 2025, beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- Roane County High School, Thursday, November 6, 2025, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

If for any reason a hearing cannot be conducted on the alternate dates or times listed, the Board will determine a date and time.

HEARING PROCEDURES

For a period of 30 minutes prior to the commencement of a public hearing, persons shall register at the hearing location for the purpose of making statements, offering testimony, and questioning school officials concerning the proposals. Each hearing will begin with an oral summary by a representative of Roane County Schools on the reasons and supporting data in connection with the proposed action by the Board. Speakers will then be recognized in the order in which they registered. Each speaker shall be limited to 5 minutes unless, in accordance with Board Policy 020, the President reduces that time limit to provide all persons wishing to speak the opportunity to do so.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN MATERIAL

The Board will consider any written material submitted by members of the public concerning the proposals if the material, with 6 copies, is submitted to and received by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 813 Capitol Street, Spencer, WV 25276, before 12:00 p.m. on Friday, October 24, 2025.

REASONS AND SUPPORTING DATA

Until the date of the first hearing, written reasons for the Superintendent's recommendation in the form of an Impact Statement and Supporting Data are available for public inspection in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 813 Capitol Street, Spencer, WV 25276, on weekdays between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

FINAL ACTION

The Board of Education will take formal action on the Superintendent's proposal to close Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and consolidate their K-5 students into existing Spencer Elementary School, their 6-8 students into existing Spencer Middle School, and all Pre-K

students from all schools into the area currently operated by the Office of Student Services located at Roane County High School at its regular meeting at Roane County High School, 1 Raider Way, Spencer WV 25276, on Thursday, November 6, 2025 beginning at 6:00 p.m. If, due to inclement weather or other cause, the Board meeting cannot be held on the scheduled date, the meeting will be held at the same location and time as originally scheduled, but on Friday, November 7, 2025.

Michelle D. Stellato
Superintendent
Roane County Schools

Newspaper: WV News- Roane County Reporter

First Run: Friday, October 3, 2025
Second Run: Friday, October 10, 2025
Third Run: Friday, October 17, 2025
Fourth Run: Friday, October 24, 2025

Proof of Public Hearing(s) Notice

Contain proof that the hearings were properly advertised with a class III legal advertisement. Such proof can be satisfied with:

- *a notarized letter from the county's qualified newspaper(s) for legal notices, as defined by the West Virginia Secretary of State, that specifically states the three dates in which the newspaper ran the county's public hearing notification; or*
- *a digital reproduction for each of the 3 required legal advertisements from the county's qualified newspaper(s) for legal notices, as defined by the West Virginia Secretary of State, where the full legal notification and date of publication is provided and legible.*

See Appendix 21 for this Documentation **(To be updated after approval)**

Public Hearing(s) Documentation and Formal Vote on the Closure(s) or Consolidation(s)

Provide documentation of all hearings, motions, written public comments, a synopsis or transcript of verbal public comments, and other actions concerning the proposed school closings and consolidations.

*Section 3.4.a of WVBE Policy 6204 contains the requirements for the public hearing(s).
Section 3.5. of WVBE Policy 6204 contains the requirements for the formal vote(s).*

See Appendix 22 for this Documentation **(To be updated after approval)**

3.6. County Board Actions

County Procedures

County Board Vote(s)

TO BE EDITED AFTER BOARD APPROVAL

After the vote and following compliance with sections 3.4 and 3.5, and prior to the implementation of any school closure or consolidation and following compliance with all statutory and regulatory provisions, the county must file a request for school closure and/or consolidation with the WVBE for approval and this request must contain:

- *A letter from the county superintendent providing the date the action was taken by the county board.*
- *The signed assurance pages contained in this template.*
- *Justification as provided by the impact statement and supporting data in section 3.2.*
- *Documentation of all hearings, motions, written public comments, a synopsis or transcript of verbal public comments, and any other related actions.*
- *Proof of proper Class III legal advertisement*
- *Below CEFP statement*
- *Below SBA statement*

Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP)

Identify if the proposed school closing or consolidation was included in the county's approved CEFP. If the county's approved CEFP did not contain the proposed closure or consolidation, the county must also submit a request to amend their CEFP. The required CEFP amendment forms shall be submitted to the WVDE Office of School Facilities staff simultaneously with the impact statement and supporting data that will be prepared for consideration by the WVBE. The CEFP amendment may be considered by the WVBE concurrently with the closure or consolidation request.

TO BE EDITED AFTER BOARD APPROVAL

School Building Authority of WV

Identify if the proposed school closing or consolidation is contingent upon receiving funding from the SBA.

Not Applicable.

3.6. Superintendent Verification of Board Actions

TO BE EDITED TO REFLECT ACTUAL MEETING DATES AND APPROVAL DATE

County Procedures

Closing and receiving school(s) name and hearing date(s):

- October 27, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Walton Elementary Middle School to be held in the Walton Elementary Middle School gymnasium.
- October 28, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Geary Elementary Middle School to be held in the Geary Elementary Middle School gymnasium
- October 29, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Spencer Elementary School to be held in the Spencer Elementary School cafeteria
- November 3, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Spencer Middle School to be held in the Roane County High School auditorium
- November 4, 2025- 5:00 PM- regarding Roane County High School to be held in the Roane County High School auditorium

Date of board approval: Thursday, November 6, 2025

Roane County requests the West Virginia Board of Education approve the following.

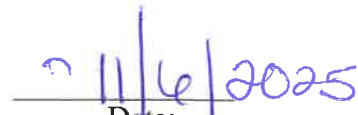
Closure and Consolidation of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School into existing Spencer Elementary School, Spencer Middle School and Roane County High School.

- ☒ *The county assures that the applicable sections of the W. Va. Codes §18-5-13 and §18-5-13a, and WVBE Policies 6200 and 6204 have been addressed.*
- ☒ *This action is justified by the provided supplemental data and information pertinent to the following subjects: enrollment, facilities, finance, personnel, transportation, and educational programs.*
- ☒ *Documentation of all hearings, motions, written public comments, a synopsis or transcript of verbal comments, and other actions concerning the proposed school closings and consolidations were provided in this document.*
- ☒ *All hearings were properly advertised with a class III legal advertisement.*

Michelle D. Stellato

Signature of county superintendent attesting to the completion of all requirements as stated in W. Va. Codes §18-5-13 and §18-5-13a and WVBE Policies 6200 and 6204.


Superintendent


Date:

Appendix of Supporting Data

The list should include, at a minimum, the following data:

- 1. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Geary Elementary/Middle School*
- 2. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Walton Elementary/Middle School*
- 3. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Spencer Elementary School*
- 4. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Roane County High School*
- 5. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Spencer Middle School*
- 6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School*
- 7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School*
- 8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School*
- 9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School*
- 10. Supporting Photographs for Geary Elementary/Middle School*
- 11. Supporting Photographs for Walton Elementary/Middle School*
- 12. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Elementary School*
- 13. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Middle School*
- 14. Supporting Photographs for Roane County High School*
- 15. Proof of Public Hearing(s) Notice for all affected schools (Required)*
- 16. Public Hearing(s) Documentation for all affected schools (Required)*
- 17. Board minutes indicating the action of the board to approve the closure(s) (Required)*
- 18. Cover letter addressed to the State Superintendent of Schools (Required)*
- 19. Completed superintendent signature pages (Required)*
- 20. 2024-2025 October 1st certified enrollment for Roane County Schools*
- 21. Proof of Public Hearing Notice*
- 22. Public Hearing Documentation*
- 23. Required Signatures*

Appendix of Supporting Data

1. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Geary Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia			
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form			
Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis Sheet			
LEA ID:	079202	Assessment Date:	43634
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	54032
Facility Name:	Geary Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1980

Individual School Utilization Analysis

	Grade Config	Age of Facility	No. of Renovations	Square Ft	Portables	Location (City, St)		
Lowest Grade Level:	PK	PK - 8	45	3	54,032	0	Geary, WV	
Highest Grade Level:	8							
Complete ONLY the column below associated with the highest grade level for this school.								
Classroom Type	Number of Class Types (ES)	Number of Class Types (MS)	Number of Class Types (HS)	X	Max Students Per Room	=	Total Program Capacity	Utilization Calculation
Pre-Kindergarten (Full Day)		1			20		20	Current Enrollment
Kindergarten (Full Day)		1			20		20	274
General Purpose Classroom		13			25		325	Total Program Capacity
Computer Lab	n/a	1			25		25	
Art Lab	n/a	1			25		25	
Music Classroom	n/a	1			25		25	
Special Ed Pull-out	n/a	n/a	n/a		0		0	533
Special Ed Level 1: (PK-5)		2			6		12	
Special Ed Level 1: (6-12)	n/a				12		0	
Special Ed Level 2: (PK-12)					12		0	
Special Ed Level 3: (PK-12)					8		0	Utilization Calculation
Special Education Classroom		1			6		6	
Technical Education/ Voc Ag	n/a				20		0	
Physical Education	n/a	1			50		50	
Science Classroom/Lab	n/a	1			25		25	Desirable Utilization
Business Education	n/a				25		0	
Family Liv/Cons Economics	n/a				25		0	85%
Totals	0	23	0				533	Difference
								-34%

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

2. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Walton Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis Sheet

LEA ID:	079206	Assessment Date:	43635
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	47739
Facility Name:	Walton Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1965

Individual School Utilization Analysis							
	Grade Config	Age of Facility	No. of Renovations	Square Ft	Portables	Location (City, St)	
Lowest Grade Level:	PK	PK - 8		47,739	0		
Highest Grade Level:	8						
Complete ONLY the column below associated with the highest grade level for this school.							
Classroom Type	Number of Class Types (ES)	Number of Class Types (MS)	Number of Class Types (HS)	X	Max Students Per Room	=	Total Program Capacity
Pre-Kindergarten (Full Day)		1			20		20
Kindergarten (Full Day)		2			20		40
General Purpose Classroom		14			25		350
Computer Lab	n/a	1			25		25
Art Lab	n/a	1			25		25
Music Classroom	n/a	1			25		25
Special Ed Pull-out	n/a	n/a	n/a		0		0
Special Ed Level 1: (PK-5)		2			6		12
Special Ed Level 1: (6-12)	n/a				12		0
Special Ed Level 2: (PK-12)					12		0
Special Ed Level 3: (PK-12)					8		0
Special Education Classroom		1			6		6
Technical Education/ Voc Ag	n/a				20		0
Physical Education	n/a	1			50		50
Science Classroom/Lab	n/a	2			25		50
Business Education	n/a				25		0
Family Liv/Cons Economics	n/a				25		0
Totals	0	26	0				603
							Utilization Calculation
							Current Enrollment
							320
							Total Program Capacity
							603
							Utilization Calculation
							53%
							Desirable Utilization
							85%
							Difference
							-32%

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

3. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Spencer Elementary School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis Sheet

LEA ID:	079205	Assessment Date:	43623
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	53463
Facility Name:	Spencer Elementary School	Original Year of Construction:	1982

Individual School Utilization Analysis												
	Grade Config		Age of Facility	No. of Renovations	Square Ft	Portables	Location (City, St)					
Lowest Grade Level:	PK	PK - 4	43	4	53,463	0	Spencer, WV					
Highest Grade Level:	4											
Complete ONLY the column below associated with the highest grade level for this school.												
Classroom Type	Number of Class Types (ES)	Number of Class Types (MS)	Number of Class Types (HS)	X	Max Students Per Room	=	Total Program Capacity	Utilization Calculation				
Pre-Kindergarten (Full Day)	2.85				20		57	Current Enrollment				
Kindergarten (Full Day)	4.5				20		90	502				
General Purpose Classroom	20				25		500					
Computer Lab	n/a				25		0	Total Program Capacity				
Art Lab	n/a				25		0	689				
Music Classroom	n/a				25		0					
Special Ed Pull-out	n/a	n/a	n/a		0		0					
Special Ed Level 1: (PK-5)	6				6		36					
Special Ed Level 1: (6-12)	n/a				12		0					
Special Ed Level 2: (PK-12)					12		0					
Special Ed Level 3: (PK-12)					8		0					
Special Education Classroom	1				6		6	Utilization Calculation				
Technical Education/ Voc Ag	n/a				20		0	73%				
Physical Education	n/a				50		0					
Science Classroom/Lab	n/a				25		0	Desirable Utilization				
Business Education	n/a				25		0	85%				
Family Liv/Cons Economics	n/a				25		0					
Totals	34.35	0	0				689	Difference				
								-12%				

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

4. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Roane County High School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis Sheet

LEA ID:	079503	Assessment Date:	43622
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	150175
Facility Name:	Roane County High	Original Year of Construction:	1993

Individual School Utilization Analysis							
	Grade Config	Age of Facility	No. of Renovations	Square Ft	Portables	Location (City, St)	
Lowest Grade Level:	9	9 - 12	32	0	150,175	0	Spencer, WV
Highest Grade Level:	12						
Complete ONLY the column below associated with the highest grade level for this school.							
Classroom Type	Number of Class Types (ES)	Number of Class Types (MS)	Number of Class Types (HS)	X	Max Students Per Room	=	Total Program Capacity
Pre-Kindergarten (Full Day)					20		0
Kindergarten (Full Day)					20		0
General Purpose Classroom			25		25		625
Computer Lab	n/a		6		25		150
Art Lab	n/a		2		25		50
Music Classroom	n/a		3		25		75
Special Ed Pull-out	n/a	n/a	n/a		0		0
Special Ed Level 1: (PK-5)					6		0
Special Ed Level 1: (6-12)	n/a				12		0
Special Ed Level 2: (PK-12)					12		0
Special Ed Level 3: (PK-12)					8		0
Special Education Classroom			3		6		18
Technical Education/ Voc Ag	n/a		1		20		20
Physical Education	n/a		2		50		100
Science Classroom/Lab	n/a		6		25		150
Business Education	n/a				25		0
Family Liv/Cons Economics	n/a				25		0
Totals	0	0	48				1188
							Utilization Calculation
							Current Enrollment
							617
							Total Program Capacity
							1188
							Utilization Calculation
							52%
							Desirable Utilization
							85%
							Difference
							-33%

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

5. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for Spencer Middle School*

School Building Authority of West Virginia
BUILDING PROGRAM UTILIZATION WORKSHEET
 Worksheet #3
 SBA FORM 301-C

NOTE: THIS FORM MAY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR A SIMILAR SBA-APPROVED DIGITAL INSTRUMENT

County: Roane School: Spencer Middle School Current Enrollment: 223

Classroom Types	Number Of Classroom Types	x	Maximum Pupils/ Class Capacity	=	Total Program Capacity
General Purpose MS Classrooms	13		25		325
Science Classroom/Lab	2		25		50
Music Classrooms	2		25		50
STEAM Lab	1		25		25
Special Ed. Level 3	2		8		16
Physical Education	1		50		50
TOTALS:	21				516

Program Utilization = $\frac{223}{\text{Current Enrollment}}$ divided by $\frac{516}{\text{Total Program Capacity}}$ =

PROGRAM UTILIZATION = 43.2 % Desirable Program Capacity = 85%

Instructions for Calculating Building Program Utilization

Elementary School – Calculate the number and type of classrooms using the maximum program capacity for each self-contained regular classroom. Assume for example – that all students are seated in a first period block without pullout programs. Do not include library/media, cafeteria, itinerant spaces, resource rooms, or optional academic classrooms such as art, music and computer labs that act as pullout programs to support the core curriculum.

Secondary School – Middle/Junior High School programs where various schedules exist, calculate the number and type of classrooms using the maximum program capacity for each regular or special classroom. Assume for example, that all students are seated in a first period block and exclude library/media, commons or any space that cannot be used for other course offerings in the daily capacity of each facility. The maximum capacity for instructional spaces for specialty classrooms is counted once. A specialty classroom may be available throughout the school day but due to its specialized design or equipment it is rendered impractical to use for other instructional purposes.

SBA 301-C

*Spencer Middle School was open in 2024

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form Campus Information Sheet					
Full AE Firm Name	The Thrasher Group, Inc.	Original Construction Yr.	1980		
County Name	Roane	Assessment Date	06/18/19		
Campus Name	Geary Elementary & Middle School	Current Enrollment	274		
Campus Type	Middle School				
School Code	079002				

Pavements					
System	Material	Year Installed If different from Building	Condition	SF	Notes
Pedestrian Pavements	Concrete		3 - Average	5,500	
Site Pavements - Parking	Asphalt		1 - Inadequate	29,500	Being replaced in 2020

Permanent Buildings								
Record	Building Name	Predominant Building Type	Include building in Assessment	Year Built	Located in Floodplain or Floodway?	GSF	Basement (Y/N)	# Floors (incl. Bsmt)
1	Geary Elementary/Middle School	Classroom	Y	1980	Yes, Partially	54,032	N	2
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
Total GSF:						54,032		

Portable Buildings				
Record	Building Name	Year Installed	GSF	Message
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total GSF:			-	

Overview of Findings
Building in good condition. In need of upgrades in older areas of building.

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form Site Evaluation Sheet			
LEA ID:	079202	Assessment Date:	06/18/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	54,032
Facility Name:	Geary Elementary & Middle Sch	Original Year of Construction:	1980

2 - Site Evaluation Worksheet

Site

City or Rural:	Rural
Actual Acres:	19
Useable Acres:	13
Site adequate for expansion:	No
Are public parks/areas adjacent:	No
% site out of flood plain:	95%
% site in flood plain:	5%
Site Remarks:	
Overall Site Condition:	3-Average

Drainage

Drainage Remarks:	
Overall Drainage Condition:	3-Average

Parking

Parking Adequately Lit:	No
Adequacy of Parking:	3-Average
Parking Remarks:	
Overall Parking Condition:	2-Below Average

Bus Loading

Bus Loading Adequate:	Yes
Bus Loading Remarks:	
Overall Bus loading Condition:	3-Average

Access Roads

Adequacy of On-Site Access Roads:	3-Average
Adequacy of Off-Site Access Roads:	3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

Access Roads Remarks:	
Overall Access Road Condition:	3-Average
Playfields/Playcourts	
Adequacy of Playfields:	4-Above Average
Adequacy of Playcourts:	3-Average
Playfields/Playcourts Remarks:	
Overall Playfield/Playcourts Condition:	3-Average
Site Utilities	
Electrical Services:	
Phase:	3
Voltage:	208
Amps:	2000
Electric Utility Company:	Mon Power
Main Service Feed into Building:	Overhead
Electrical Service Remarks:	
Overall Electrical Service Condition:	3-Average
Fuel Sources:	
Natural Gas:	Yes
Coal:	No
Fuel Oils:	No
Propane:	No
Other (Specify):	
Fuel Line Size (inches):	3
Fuel Utility Company:	Mountaineer Gas
Fuel Sources Remarks:	
Overall Fuel Sources Condition:	3-Average
Water Sources:	
Public:	Yes
Well:	No
Water Line Size (inches):	6
Water Utility Company:	City of Spencer
Water Sources Remarks:	
Overall Water Sources Condition:	3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

Sewage Systems:	
Public:	Yes
Septic:	No
Other (Specify):	
Public Service District (PSD):	City of Spencer
Sewage System Remarks:	
Overall Sewage System Condition:	3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Facility General Information Sheet

1 - Facility General Information Worksheet

LEA ID:	079202	Assessment Date:	06/18/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	54,032
Facility Name:	Geary Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1980

Energy Indexes

(List the total amount of each fuel source used for one year)

<u>Source (Units)</u>	<u>Consumption per Year</u>	<u>Conversion (BTU/Unit)</u>	<u>Total BTU</u>
Electric (Kilowatt-Hrs)	403,800	3,412	1,377,822,132
Natural Gas (MCF) --OR--	1,188	1,037,000	1,231,956,000
Natural Gas (Decotherms)		1,000,000	-
Coal (Tons)		24,000,000	-
#2 Fuel Oil (Gallons)		138,874	-
Propane (Pounds)		21,600	-
Used Oil (Gallons)		125,000	-
Wood Chips (Tons)		16,500,000	-
Other (specify)			
Amount:			
Units:			-

Worksheet Links:

Total BTU: 2,609,778,132
Energy Utilization Index (EUI): 48,301

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form Building Component Evaluation Sheet			
LEA ID:	079202	Assessment Date:	06/18/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	54,032
Facility Name:	Geary Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1980

3 - Building Component Evaluation Worksheet

Building Structures:

Type: Load Bearing Masonry

Building Structures Remarks:

Overall Building Structure Condition: 3-Average

Floor Structures:

Steel Joist/Concrete (floor area SF): 10,581

Wood Joists (floor area SF):

Slab on Grade (floor area SF): 43,451

Other (specify) / Floor area SF:

Floor Structure Remarks:

Overall Floor Structure Condition: 4-Above Average

Roof:

Roof Structure: Steel Joists

Roof Structures Remarks:

Overall Roof Condition: 4-Above Average

Building Systems:

The systems below are addressed in the FCA data collection tool.

- Roof Coverings - Wall Finishes - Ceiling Finishes - Floor Finishes - Doors - Windows - HVAC - Electrical - Fire Alarm	

Technology Infrastructure:

Sufficient Electrical Capacity: Yes 4-Above Average

Power Receptacles Availability: Yes 4-Above Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

ID Network Type (if available):	Yes	5-Excellent
Inventory Records Hardware	Yes	5-Excellent
Other (specify):		
Deficiencies:		
Technology Remarks:		
Overall Technology Infrastructure Condition	4-Above Average	
Technology Assessment:		
Teacher Training:	5-Excellent	
Software Use:	5-Excellent	
Purchasing Practices:	5-Excellent	
Network Administration:	5-Excellent	
Inventory Records	5-Excellent	
Other (specify):		
Deficiencies:		
Technology Remarks:		
Overall Technology Condition:	5-Excellent	
School Access Safety Audit:		
Planning:	5-Excellent	
Deterrence:	5-Excellent	
Detection:	5-Excellent	
Delay:	5-Excellent	
Communication:	5-Excellent	
Evacuation:	5-Excellent	
Safety Remarks:		
Overall Access Safety Condition:	5-Excellent	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
School Improvement Cost Summary Sheet

LEA ID:	079002	Assessment Date:	06/18/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	54032
Facility Name:	Geary Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1980
Design Capacity Enrollment:	498		

Please note, the current-year costs shown below are intended to provide a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) estimate of costs. While they are appropriate for high-level capital forecasting, they should not be relied upon for determining specific project funding values. Actual project costs will likely deviate from the presented values due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, hard and soft cost fluctuations and the actual date of construction for the intended project. Therefore, detailed cost estimates are recommended to validate funding requirements prior to obligating funds for facility replacement or renovation.

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
1. Site Work					
Land Acquisition	Acres			\$ -	
Excavation/Grade	CUB FT		\$ 20.00	\$ -	
Drainage	LN FT		\$ 60.00	\$ -	
Walks (6 ft wide)	SQ FT	2,500	\$ 10.00	\$ 25,000.00	
Parking	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	New paving included in 2019 Bond
Bus Loading	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	New paving included in 2019 Bond
Roads	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Playing Fields	SQ FT		\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 25,000.00	
2. Renovations, Exterior					
Wall Structure	SQ FT		\$ 25.00	\$ -	
Floor Structure	SQ FT		\$ 80.00	\$ -	
Roof Structure	SQ FT		\$ 12.00	\$ -	
Wall Facing	SQ FT			\$ -	
Windows	EACH	41	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 164,000.00	
Doors/Frames	EACH	11	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 60,500.00	
Roofing	SQ FT		\$ 20.00	\$ -	New roofing in 2019 Bond
Coping/Parapet	LN FT		\$ 15.00	\$ -	
Painting	SQ FT		\$ 8.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 224,500.00	
3. Renovations, Interior					
Floor Covering	SQ FT		\$ 10.00	\$ -	
Patch & Painting	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Ceiling Finish	SQ FT	23,570	\$ 12.00	\$ 282,840.00	
Plumbing	SQ FT	4,000	\$ 24.00	\$ 96,000.00	
Heating/Ventilating	SQ FT	54,032	\$ 30.00	\$ 1,620,960.00	Includes Heating, Cooling & Controls
Air Conditioning	SQ FT			\$ -	
Lighting	SQ FT	54,032	\$ 5.00	\$ 270,160.00	
Wiring	SQ FT	27,000	\$ 6.00	\$ 162,000.00	
Fire Alarm	SQ FT	54,032	\$ 2.50	\$ 135,080.00	
Communication System	SQ FT	54,032	\$ 6.00	\$ 324,192.00	
Technology	SQ FT	54,032	\$ 6.00	\$ 324,192.00	
Interior Doors	EACH	58	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 261,000.00	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Other (Describe in Remarks)				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 3,476,424.00	
4. Building Additions Including Furniture, Furnishings & Equipment					
Administration (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Student Services (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

Kindergarten (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Primary (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Media Center (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Basic (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Reading (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 140.00	\$ -	
Health Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Computer Lab (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Inst. Mat. Center (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Home Economics (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Art (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Ind. Technology (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Music (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Physical Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Auditorium (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Special Education (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Multi-Purpose (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 115.00	\$ -	
Kitchen (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Dining (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Business Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Co-Op Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Drivers Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Staff/Faculty (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Toilets/Pictures (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 175.00	\$ -	
Storage General (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Storage Instructional (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Custodial (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 80.00	\$ -	
Mechanical (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Subtotal of Building Additions (SQ FT)		0			
Circulation	30%	0		\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

5. Special Construction	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Elevator	EACH		\$150,000.00	\$ -	
Sprinkler Systems	SQ FT	54,032	\$ 2.00	\$ 108,064.00	Maintenance & Upgrades
Kitchen Equipment	ALL		\$300,000.00	\$ -	
Waste Treatment	EACH		\$600,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 108,064.00	

6. Other Special Costs	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
Sub-Total			\$ -	
Sub-Total of Items 1 through 6			\$ 3,833,988.00	

7. Architectural/Engineering Fees	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks
New Construction			\$ -	
Renovations	8.0%	\$ 3,833,988.00	\$ 306,719.04	
Sub-Total			\$ 306,719.04	

8. Miscellaneous	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Survey	EACH			\$ -	
Soil Inv.	EACH			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

9. Contingencies	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

6. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Geary Elementary/Middle School

New Construction			\$ -	
Renovations	6.0%	\$ 3,833,988.00	\$ 230,039.28	
Sub-Total			\$ 230,039.28	

Grand Total Project Cost	\$ 4,370,746.32

Worksheet Links:

[Campus Information](#)

[Building 1](#)

[Building 2](#)

[Building 3](#)

[Building 4](#)

[Building 5](#)

[Building 6](#)

[Building 7](#)

[Building 8](#)

[Building 9](#)

[Building 10](#)

[Site Evaluation](#)

[Facility General Information](#)

[Building Component Evaluation](#)

[Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis](#)

[School Improvement Cost Summary](#)

Reference Data from Prior Sheets (for WVDE Use Only):	
Energy Utilization Index:	48,301
Current Enrollment:	274
Program Capacity:	533
Utilization Calculation:	51%
Building(s) in Floodplain/Floodway:	1

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Campus Information Sheet

Full AE Firm Name
County Name
Campus Name
Campus Type
School Code

The Thrasher Group, Inc.
Roane
Walton Elementary & Middle School
Middle School
079206

Original Construction Yr.
Assessment Date
Current Enrollment

1965
06/19/19
339

Pavements					
System	Material	Year Installed if different from Building	Condition	SF	Notes
Pedestrian Pavements	Concrete	1995	3 - Average	2,840	
Site Pavements - Parking	Asphalt	1995	2 - Below Average	55,000	New paving in 2020

Permanent Buildings								
Record	Building Name	Predominant Building Type	Include building in Assessment	Year Built	Located in Floodplain or Floodway?	GSF	Basement (Y/N)	# Floors (incl. Bemt)
1	Walton PK-8 School	Classroom	Y	1966	No	47,739	N	1
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
Total GSF:						47,739		

Portable Buildings				
Record	Building Name	Year Installed	GSF	Message
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total GSF:			-	

Overview of Findings
Building in need of renovations & upgrades

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Site Evaluation Sheet**

LEA ID:	079206	Assessment Date:	06/19/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	47,739
Facility Name:	Walton Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1965

2 - Site Evaluation Worksheet

Site

City or Rural:	Rural
Actual Acres:	29
Useable Acres:	20
Site adequate for expansion:	Yes
Are public parks/areas adjacent:	No
% site out of flood plain:	100%
% site in flood plain:	0%

Site Remarks:

Overall Site Condition:

3-Average

Drainage

Drainage Remarks:

Overall Drainage Condition:

3-Average

Parking

Parking Adequately Lit:

Adequacy of Parking:

No

3-Average

Parking Remarks:

Overall Parking Condition:

3-Average

Bus Loading

Bus Loading Adequate:

Yes

Bus Loading Remarks:

Overall Bus loading Condition:

3-Average

Access Roads

Adequacy of On-Site Access Roads:

Adequacy of Off-Site Access Roads:

2-Below Average

3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

Access Roads Remarks:	
Overall Access Road Condition:	2-Below Average

Playfields/Playcourts

Adequacy of Playfields:	3-Average
Adequacy of Playcourts:	3-Average
Playfields/Playcourts Remarks:	
Overall Playfield/Playcourts Condition:	3-Average

Site Utilities

Electrical Services:

Phase:	3
Voltage:	220 -480
Amps:	2000
Electric Utility Company:	Allegheny Power
Main Service Feed into Building:	Overhead
Electrical Service Remarks:	
Overall Electrical Service Condition:	3-Average

Fuel Sources:

Natural Gas:	Yes
Coal:	No
Fuel Oils:	No
Propane:	No
Other (Specify):	
Fuel Line Size (inches):	3
Fuel Utility Company:	
Fuel Sources Remarks:	
Overall Fuel Sources Condition:	3-Average

Water Sources:

Public:	Yes
Well:	No
Water Line Size (inches):	4
Water Utility Company:	Roane County PSD
Water Sources Remarks:	
Overall Water Sources Condition:	3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

Sewage Systems:

Public:

Yes

Septic:

No

Other (Specify):

Public Service District (PSD):

Roane County PSD

Sewage System Remarks:

Overall Sewage System Condition:

3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Facility General Information Sheet

1 - Facility General Information Worksheet

LEA ID:	079206	Assessment Date:	06/19/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	47,739
Facility Name:	Walton Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1965

Energy Indexes

(List the total amount of each fuel source used for one year)

Source (Units)	Consumption per Year	Conversion (BTU/Unit)	Total BTU
Electric (Kilowatt-Hrs)	424,800	3,412	1,449,477,072
Natural Gas (MCF) --OR--	1,837	1,037,000	1,904,969,000
Natural Gas (Decootherms)		1,000,000	-
Coal (Tons)		24,000,000	-
#2 Fuel Oil (Gallons)		138,874	-
Propane (Pounds)		21,600	-
Used Oil (Gallons)		125,000	-
Wood Chips (Tons)		16,500,000	-
Other (specify)			
Amount:			
Units:			-

Total BTU: 3,354,446,072

Worksheet Links:

Energy Utilization Index (EUI): 70,266

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Building Component Evaluation Sheet**

LEA ID:	079206	Assessment Date:	06/19/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	47,739
Facility Name:	Walton Elementary & Middle Sch	Original Year of Construction:	1965

3 - Building Component Evaluation Worksheet

Building Structures:

Type:	Load Bearing Masonry	
Building Structures Remarks:		
Overall Building Structure Condition:	3-Average	

Floor Structures:

Steel Joist/Concrete (floor area SF):		
Wood Joists (floor area SF):		
Slab on Grade (floor area SF):	47,739	
Other (specify) / Floor area SF:		
Floor Structure Remarks:		
Overall Floor Structure Condition:	3-Average	

Roof:

Roof Structure:	Steel Joists	
Roof Structures Remarks:		
Overall Roof Condition:	3-Average	

Building Systems:

The systems below are addressed in the FCA data collection tool.

Roof Coverings		
Wall Finishes		
Ceiling Finishes		
Floor Finishes		
Doors		
Windows		
HVAC		
Electrical		
Fire Alarm		

Technology Infrastructure:

Sufficient Electrical Capacity:	Yes	3-Average
Power Receptacles Availability:	Yes	3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

ID Network Type (if available):	Yes	3-Average
Inventory Records Hardware	Yes	3-Average
Other (specify):		
Deficiencies:		
Technology Remarks:		
Overall Technology Infrastructure Condition:	3-Average	
Technology Assessment:		
Teacher Training:	5-Excellent	
Software Use:	5-Excellent	
Purchasing Practices:	5-Excellent	
Network Administration:	5-Excellent	
Inventory Records	5-Excellent	
Other (specify):		
Deficiencies:		
Technology Remarks:		
Overall Technology Condition:	5-Excellent	
School Access Safety Audit:		
Planning:	5-Excellent	
Deterrence:	5-Excellent	
Detection:	5-Excellent	
Delay:	5-Excellent	
Communication:	5-Excellent	
Evacuation:	5-Excellent	
Safety Remarks:		
Overall Access Safety Condition:	5-Excellent	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
School Improvement Cost Summary Sheet**

LEA ID:	079206	Assessment Date:	06/19/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	47739
Facility Name:	Walton Elementary & Middle School	Original Year of Construction:	1965
Design Capacity Enrollment:	676		

Please note, the current-year costs shown below are intended to provide a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) estimate of costs. While they are appropriate for high-level capital forecasting, they should not be relied upon for determining specific project funding values. Actual project costs will likely deviate from the presented values due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, hard and soft cost fluctuations and the actual date of construction for the intended project. Therefore, detailed cost estimates are recommended to validate funding requirements prior to obligating funds for facility replacement or renovation.

Improvement Item

1. Site Work

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Land Acquisition	Acres			\$ -	
Excavation/Grade	CUB FT		\$ 20.00	\$ -	
Drainage	LIN FT		\$ 60.00	\$ -	
Walks (6 ft wide)	SQ FT		\$ 10.00	\$ -	
Parking	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	new paving in 2020
Bus Loading	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	new paving in 2020
Roads	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	new paving in 2020
Playing Fields	SQ FT		\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	

Sub-Total \$ -

2. Renovations, Exterior

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Wall Structure	SQ FT		\$ 25.00	\$ -	
Floor Structure	SQ FT		\$ 40.00	\$ -	
Roof Structure	SQ FT		\$ 12.00	\$ -	
Wall Facing	SQ FT			\$ -	
Windows	EACH	76	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 304,000.00	
Doors/Frames	EACH	14	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 77,000.00	
Roofing	SQ FT		\$ 20.00	\$ -	roof replacement 2019
Coping/Parapet	LIN FT		\$ 15.00	\$ -	
Painting	SQ FT		\$ 8.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	

Sub-Total \$ 381,000.00

3. Renovations, Interior

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Floor Covering	SQ FT	24,000	\$ 10.00	\$ 240,000.00	
Patch & Painting	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Ceiling Finish	SQ FT	47,739	\$ 12.00	\$ 572,868.00	
Plumbing	SQ FT	3,500	\$ 24.00	\$ 84,000.00	
Heating/Ventilating	SQ FT	47,739	\$ 30.00	\$ 1,432,170.00	Includes heating & cooling
Air Conditioning	SQ FT			\$ -	
Lighting	SQ FT	47,739	\$ 5.00	\$ 238,695.00	
Wiring	SQ FT	15,755	\$ 6.00	\$ 94,530.00	
Fire Alarm	SQ FT	47,739	\$ 2.50	\$ 119,347.50	
Communication System	SQ FT	47,739	\$ 6.00	\$ 286,434.00	
Technology			\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Interior Doors	EACH	42	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 189,000.00	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	

Sub-Total \$ 3,257,044.50

4. Building Additions Including Furniture,

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Furnishings & Equipment					
Administration (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Student Services (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

Kindergarten (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Primary (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Media Center (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Basic (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Reading (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 140.00	\$ -	
Health Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Computer Lab (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Inst. Mat. Center (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Home Economics (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Art (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Ind. Technology (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Music (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Physical Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Auditorium (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Special Education (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Multi-Purpose (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 115.00	\$ -	
Kitchen (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Dining (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Business Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Co-Op Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Drivers Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Staff/Faculty (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Toilets/Pictures (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 175.00	\$ -	
Storage General (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Storage Instructional (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Custodial (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 80.00	\$ -	
Mechanical (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Subtotal of Building Additions (SQ FT)		0		\$ -	
Circulation	30%	0		\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

5. Special Construction	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Elevator	EACH		\$150,000.00	\$ -	
Sprinkler Systems	SQ FT	47,739	\$ 2.00	\$ 95,478.00	Maintenance & upgrades
Kitchen Equipment	ALL	1	\$300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	
Waste Treatment	EACH		\$600,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 395,478.00	

6. Other Special Costs	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
Sub-Total			\$ -	
Sub-Total of Items 1 through 6			\$ 4,033,522.50	

7. Architectural/Engineering Fees	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks
New Construction			\$ -	
Renovations	8.0%	\$4,033,523.00	\$ 322,681.84	
Sub-Total			\$ 322,681.84	

8. Miscellaneous	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Survey	EACH			\$ -	
Soil Inv.	EACH			\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

9. Contingencies	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks
New Construction			\$ -	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

7. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Walton Elementary/Middle School

Renovations	6.0%	\$4,033,523.00	\$ 242,011.38	
Sub-Total			\$ 242,011.38	
Grand Total Project Cost			\$ 4,598,215.72	

Worksheet Links:

[Campus Information](#)
[Building 1](#)
[Building 2](#)
[Building 3](#)
[Building 4](#)
[Building 5](#)
[Building 6](#)
[Building 7](#)
[Building 8](#)
[Building 9](#)
[Building 10](#)
[Site Evaluation](#)
[Facility General Information](#)
[Building Component Evaluation](#)
[Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis](#)
[School Improvement Cost Summary](#)

Reference Data from Prior Sheets (for WVDE Use Only):	
Energy Utilization Index:	70,266
Current Enrollment:	320
Program Capacity:	603
Utilization Calculation:	53%
Building(s) in Floodplain/Floodway:	0

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Campus Information Sheet

Full AE Firm Name	The Thrasher Group, Inc.
County Name	Roane
Campus Name	Spencer Elementary School
Campus Type	Elementary School
School Code	079205

Original Construction Yr.	1982
Assessment Date	06/07/19
Current Enrollment	582

Pavements					
System	Material	Year Installed if different from Building	Condition	SF	Notes
Pedestrian Pavements	Concrete		3 - Average	5,064	
Site Pavements - Parking	Asphalt		1 - Inadequate	25,000	Being replaced in 2020

Permanent Buildings								
Record	Building Name	Predominant Building Type	Include building in Assessment	Year Built	Located in Floodplain or Floodway?	GSF	Basement (Y/N)	# Floors (incl. Bsm't)
1	Spencer Elementary School	Classroom	Y	1982	No	53,463	N	2
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
Total GSF:						53,463		

Portable Buildings				
Record	Building Name	Year Installed	GSF	Message
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total GSF:				

Overview of Findings
Facility is well maintained. Needs renovations & upgrades.

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Site Evaluation Sheet**

LEA ID:	079205	Assessment Date:	06/07/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	53,463
Facility Name:	Spencer Elementary School	Original Year of Construction:	1982

2 - Site Evaluation Worksheet

Site

City or Rural:	City
Actual Acres:	27.51
Useable Acres:	14
Site adequate for expansion:	Yes
Are public parks/areas adjacent:	No
% site out of flood plain:	100%
% site in flood plain:	0%

Site Remarks:

Overall Site Condition:

3-Average

Drainage

Drainage Remarks:

Overall Drainage Condition:

3-Average

Parking

Parking Adequately Lit:

Adequacy of Parking:

No

3-Average

Parking Remarks:

Overall Parking Condition:

3-Average

Bus Loading

Bus Loading Adequate:

No

Bus Loading Remarks:

Overall Bus loading Condition:

3-Average

Access Roads

Adequacy of On-Site Access Roads:

Adequacy of Off-Site Access Roads:

3-Average

3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

Access Roads Remarks:

Overall Access Road Condition:

3-Average

Playfields/Playcourts

Adequacy of Playfields:

3-Average

Adequacy of Playcourts:

3-Average

Playfields/Playcourts Remarks:

Overall Playfield/Playcourts Condition:

3-Average

Site Utilities

Electrical Services:

Phase:

3

Voltage:

208

Amps:

1200

Electric Utility Company:

Mon. Power

Main Service Feed into Building:

Electrical Service Remarks:

Overall Electrical Service Condition:

3-Average

Fuel Sources:

Natural Gas:

Yes

Coal:

No

Fuel Oils:

No

Propane:

No

Other (Specify):

Fuel Line Size (inches):

2

Fuel Utility Company:

Mountaineer Gas

Fuel Sources Remarks:

Overall Fuel Sources Condition:

3-Average

Water Sources:

Public:

Yes

Well:

No

Water Line Size (inches):

2

Water Utility Company:

City of Spencer

Water Sources Remarks:

Overall Water Sources Condition:

3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

Sewage Systems:	
Public:	Yes
Septic:	No
Other (Specify):	
Public Service District (PSD):	City of Spencer
Sewage System Remarks:	
Overall Sewage System Condition:	3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Facility General Information Sheet**

1 - Facility General Information Worksheet

LEA ID:	079205	Assessment Date:	06/07/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	53,463
Facility Name:	Spencer Elementary School	Original Year of Construction:	1982

Energy Indexes

(List the total amount of each fuel source used for one year)

<u>Source (Units)</u>	<u>Consumption per Year</u>	<u>Conversion (BTU/Unit)</u>	<u>Total BTU</u>
Electric (Kilowatt-Hrs)	533,680	3,412	1,820,990,875
Natural Gas (MCF) --OR--	638	1,037,000	661,606,000
Natural Gas (Decotherms)		1,000,000	-
Coal (Tons)		24,000,000	-
#2 Fuel Oil (Gallons)		138,874	-
Propane (Pounds)		21,600	-
Used Oil (Gallons)		125,000	-
Wood Chips (Tons)		16,500,000	-
Other (specify)			
Amount:			
Units:			-

Total BTU: 2,482,596,875

Worksheet Links:

Energy Utilization Index (EUI): 46,436

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Building Component Evaluation Sheet**

LEA ID:	079205	Assessment Date:	06/07/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	53,463
Facility Name:	Spencer Elementary School	Original Year of Construction:	1982

3 - Building Component Evaluation Worksheet

Building Structures:

Type:	Load Bearing Masonry	
Building Structures Remarks:		
Overall Building Structure Condition:	4-Above Average	

Floor Structures:

Steel Joist/Concrete (floor area SF):	7,789	
Wood Joists (floor area SF):		
Slab on Grade (floor area SF):	34,855	
Other (specify) / Floor area SF:		
Floor Structure Remarks:		
Overall Floor Structure Condition:	4-Above Average	

Roof:

Roof Structure:	Steel Joists	
Roof Structures Remarks:		
Overall Roof Condition:	3-Average	

Building Systems:

The systems below are addressed in the FCA data collection tool.

Roof Coverings		
Wall Finishes		
Ceiling Finishes		
Floor Finishes		
Doors		
Windows		
HVAC		
Electrical		
Fire Alarm		

Technology Infrastructure:

Sufficient Electrical Capacity:	Yes	4-Above Average
Power Receptacles Availability:	Yes	3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

ID Network Type (if available):	Yes	5-Excellent
Inventory Records Hardware	Yes	5-Excellent
Other (specify):		
Deficiencies:		
Technology Remarks:		
Overall Technology Infrastructure Condition:	4-Above Average	
Technology Assessment:		
Teacher Training:	5-Excellent	
Software Use:	5-Excellent	
Purchasing Practices:	5-Excellent	
Network Administration:	5-Excellent	
Inventory Records	5-Excellent	
Other (specify):		
Deficiencies:		
Technology Remarks:		
Overall Technology Condition:	5-Excellent	
School Access Safety Audit:		
Planning:	5-Excellent	
Deterrence:	5-Excellent	
Detection:	5-Excellent	
Delay:	5-Excellent	
Communication:	5-Excellent	
Evacuation:	5-Excellent	
Safety Remarks:		
Overall Access Safety Condition:	5-Excellent	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
School Improvement Cost Summary Sheet**

LEA ID:	079205	Assessment Date:	06/07/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	53463
Facility Name:	Spencer Elementary School	Original Year of Construction:	1982
Design Capacity Enrollment:	689		

Please note, the current-year costs shown below are intended to provide a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) estimate of costs. While they are appropriate for high-level capital forecasting, they should not be relied upon for determining specific project funding values. Actual project costs will likely deviate from the presented values due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, hard and soft cost fluctuations and the actual date of construction for the intended project. Therefore, detailed cost estimates are recommended to validate funding requirements prior to obligating funds for facility replacement or renovation.

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
1. Site Work					
Land Acquisition	Acres			\$ -	
Excavation/Grade	CUB FT		\$ 20.00	\$ -	
Drainage	LN FT		\$ 60.00	\$ -	
Walks (6 ft wide)	SQ FT	4,019	\$ 10.00	\$ 40,190.00	
Parking	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	New paving in 2020 from bond
Bus Loading	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	New paving in 202 from bond
Roads	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Playing Fields	SQ FT		\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 40,190.00	

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
2. Renovations, Exterior					
Wall Structure	SQ FT		\$ 25.00	\$ -	
Floor Structure	SQ FT		\$ 40.00	\$ -	
Roof Structure	SQ FT		\$ 12.00	\$ -	
Wall Facing	SQ FT			\$ -	
Windows	EACH	72	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 288,000.00	
Doors/Frames	EACH	20	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 110,000.00	
Roofing	SQ FT		\$ 20.00	\$ -	
Coping/Parapet	LN FT		\$ 15.00	\$ -	
Painting	SQ FT		\$ 8.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 398,000.00	

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
3. Renovations, Interior					
Floor Covering	SQ FT	42,374	\$ 10.00	\$ 423,740.00	
Patch & Painting	SQ FT		\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Ceiling Finish	SQ FT	42,474	\$ 12.00	\$ 509,688.00	
Plumbing	SQ FT	14,000	\$ 24.00	\$ 336,000.00	
Heating/Ventilating	SQ FT		\$ 30.00	\$ -	
Air Conditioning	SQ FT			\$ -	
Lighting	SQ FT	53,463	\$ 5.00	\$ 267,315.00	
Wiring	SQ FT	18,000	\$ 6.00	\$ 108,000.00	
Fire Alarm	SQ FT	53,463	\$ 2.50	\$ 133,657.50	
Communication System	SQ FT	53,463	\$ 6.00	\$ 320,778.00	
Technology			\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Interior Doors	EACH	75	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 337,500.00	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 2,436,678.50	

Improvement Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
4. Building Additions Including Furniture, Furnishings & Equipment					
Administration (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Student Services (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

Kindergarten (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Primary (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Media Center (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Basic (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Reading (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 140.00	\$ -	
Health Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Computer Lab (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Inst. Mat. Center (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Home Economics (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Art (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Ind. Technology (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Music (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Physical Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Auditorium (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Special Education (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Multi Purpose (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 115.00	\$ -	
Kitchen (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Dining (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Business Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Co-Op Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Drivers Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Staff/Faculty (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Toilets/Pictures (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 175.00	\$ -	
Storage General (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Storage Instructional (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Custodial (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 80.00	\$ -	
Mechanical (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Subtotal of Building Additions (SQ FT)		0			
Circulation	30%	0		\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

5. Special Construction	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Elevator	EACH		\$150,000.00	\$ -	
Sprinkler Systems	SQ FT	53,463	\$ 2.00	\$ 106,926.00	Maintenance & upgrades
Kitchen Equipment	ALL	1	\$300,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	
Waste Treatment	EACH		\$600,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 256,926.00	

6. Other Special Costs	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
Sub-Total			\$ -	
Sub-Total of Items 1 through 6			\$ 3,131,794.50	

7. Architectural/Engineering Fees	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks
New Construction			\$ -	
Renovations	8.0%	\$ 3,131,795.00	\$ 250,543.60	
Sub-Total			\$ 250,543.60	

8. Miscellaneous	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Survey	EACH			\$ -	
Soil Inv.	EACH			\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Other (Describe in 'Remarks')				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

9. Contingencies	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks
New Construction			\$ -	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

8. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Spencer Elementary School

Renovations	6.0%	\$3,131,795.00	\$ 187,907.70	
Sub-Total			\$ 187,907.70	
Grand Total Project Cost			\$ 3,570,245.80	

Worksheet Links:

[Campus Information](#)
[Building 1](#)
[Building 2](#)
[Building 3](#)
[Building 4](#)
[Building 5](#)
[Building 6](#)
[Building 7](#)
[Building 8](#)
[Building 9](#)
[Building 10](#)
[Site Evaluation](#)
[Facility General Information](#)
[Building Component Evaluation](#)
[Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis](#)
[School Improvement Cost Summary](#)

Reference Data from Prior Sheets (for WVDE Use Only):	
Energy Utilization Index:	46,436
Current Enrollment:	502
Program Capacity:	689
Utilization Calculation:	73%
Building(s) in Floodplain/Floodway:	0

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Campus Information Sheet

Full AE Firm Name
County Name
Campus Name
Campus Type
School Code

The Thrasher Group, Inc.
Roane
Roane County High
High School
079503

Original Construction Yr.
Assessment Date
Current Enrollment

1993
06/06/19
617

Pavements					
System	Material	Year Installed If different from Building	Condition	\$F	Notes
Pedestrian Pavements	Concrete		3 - Average	13,852	
Site Pavements - Parking	Asphalt		1 - Inadequate	125,000	Being replaced in 2020

Permanent Buildings								
Record	Building Name	Predominant Building Type	Include building in Assessment	Year Built	Located in Floodplain or Floodway?	GSF	Basement (Y/N)	# Floors (incl. Bmt)
1	Roane County High School	Classroom	Y	1993	No	150,175	N	2
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
Total GSF:						150,175		

Portable Buildings				
Record	Building Name	Year Installed	GSF	Message
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Total GSF:			-	

Overview of Findings	
Newly constructed in 1993. In need of renovations & upgrades.	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Site Evaluation Sheet**

LEA ID:	079503	Assessment Date:	06/06/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	150,175
Facility Name:	Roane County High	Original Year of Construction:	1993

2 - Site Evaluation Worksheet

Site

City or Rural:	City
Actual Acres:	72
Useable Acres:	45
Site adequate for expansion:	Yes
Are public parks/areas adjacent:	No
% site out of flood plain:	100%
% site in flood plain:	0%

Site Remarks:

Overall Site Condition:

4-Above Average

Drainage

Drainage Remarks:

Overall Drainage Condition:

4-Above Average

Parking

Parking Adequately Lit:

Adequacy of Parking:

No
3-Average

Parking Remarks:

Overall Parking Condition:

3-Average

Bus Loading

Bus Loading Adequate:

Bus Loading Remarks:

Overall Bus loading Condition:

Yes
3-Average

Access Roads

Adequacy of On-Site Access Roads:

Adequacy of Off-Site Access Roads:

2-Below Average
3-Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

Access Roads Remarks:	
Overall Access Road Condition:	3-Average
Playfields/Playcourts	
Adequacy of Playfields:	5-Excellent
Adequacy of Playcourts:	1-Inadequate
Playfields/Playcourts Remarks:	Playcourts do not exist
Overall Playfield/Playcourts Condition:	3-Average
Site Utilities	
Electrical Services:	
Phase:	3
Voltage:	480
Amps:	4000
Electric Utility Company:	Mon Power
Main Service Feed into Building:	Underground
Electrical Service Remarks:	
Overall Electrical Service Condition:	3-Average
Fuel Sources:	
Natural Gas:	Yes
Coal:	No
Fuel Oils:	No
Propane:	No
Other (Specify):	
Fuel Line Size (inches):	3
Fuel Utility Company:	Mountaineer Gas
Fuel Sources Remarks:	
Overall Fuel Sources Condition:	4-Above Average
Water Sources:	
Public:	Yes
Well:	No
Water Line Size (inches):	6
Water Utility Company:	Spencer Water Company
Water Sources Remarks:	
Overall Water Sources Condition:	4-Above Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

Sewage Systems:

Public:

Yes

Septic:

No

Other (Specify):

Public Service District (PSD):

Spencer Sanitary

Sewage System Remarks:

Overall Sewage System Condition:

4-Above Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Facility General Information Sheet

1 - Facility General Information Worksheet

LEA ID:	079503	Assessment Date:	06/06/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	150,175
Facility Name:	Roane County High	Original Year of Construction:	1993

Energy Indexes

(List the total amount of each fuel source used for one year)

Source (Units)	Consumption per Year	Conversion (BTU/Unit)	Total BTU
Electric (Kilowatt-Hrs)	1,891,553	3,412	6,454,243,653
Natural Gas (MCF) --OR--	2,048	1,037,000	2,123,776,000
Natural Gas (Decotherms)		1,000,000	-
Coal (Tons)		24,000,000	-
#2 Fuel Oil (Gallons)		138,874	-
Propane (Pounds)		21,600	-
Used Oil (Gallons)		125,000	-
Wood Chips (Tons)		16,500,000	-
Other (specify)			
Amount:			
Units:			-

Total BTU: 8,578,019,653

Worksheet Links:

Energy Utilization Index (EUI): 57,120

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
Building Component Evaluation Sheet**

LEA ID:	079503	Assessment Date:	06/06/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	150,175
Facility Name:	Roane County High	Original Year of Construction:	1993

3 - Building Component Evaluation Worksheet

Building Structures:

Type:	Load Bearing Masonry
Building Structures Remarks:	
Overall Building Structure Condition:	4-Above Average

Floor Structures:

Steel Joist/Concrete (floor area SF):	33,175
Wood Joists (floor area SF):	
Slab on Grade (floor area SF):	117,000
Other (specify) / Floor area SF:	
Floor Structure Remarks:	
Overall Floor Structure Condition:	4-Above Average

Roof:

Roof Structure:	Steel Joists
Roof Structures Remarks:	
Overall Roof Condition:	3-Average

Building Systems:

The systems below are addressed in the FCA data collection tool.

Roof Coverings		
Wall Finishes		
Ceiling Finishes		
Floor Finishes		
Doors		
Windows		
HVAC		
Electrical		
Fire Alarm		

Technology Infrastructure:

Sufficient Electrical Capacity:	Yes	4-Above Average
Power Receptacles Availability:	Yes	4-Above Average

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

ID Network Type (if available):	Yes	4-Above Average
Inventory Records Hardware	Yes	3-Average
Other (specify):		
Deficiencies:		
Technology Remarks:		
Overall Technology Infrastructure Condition	4-Above Average	

Technology Assessment:

Teacher Training:	5-Excellent
Software Use:	5-Excellent
Purchasing Practices:	5-Excellent
Network Administration:	5-Excellent
Inventory Records	5-Excellent
Other (specify):	
Deficiencies:	
Technology Remarks:	
Overall Technology Condition:	5-Excellent

School Access Safety Audit:

Planning:	5-Excellent
Deterrence:	5-Excellent
Detection:	5-Excellent
Delay:	5-Excellent
Communication:	5-Excellent
Evacuation:	5-Excellent
Safety Remarks:	
Overall Access Safety Condition:	5-Excellent

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

**School Building Authority of West Virginia
SBA Form 134 Data Collection Form
School Improvement Cost Summary Sheet**

LEA ID:	079503	Assessment Date:	06/06/19
County:	Roane	Total Gross Square Feet:	150175
Facility Name:	Roane County High	Original Year of Construction:	1995
Design Capacity Enrollment:	1150		

Please note, the current-year costs shown below are intended to provide a Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) estimate of costs. While they are appropriate for high-level capital forecasting, they should not be relied upon for determining specific project funding values. Actual project costs will likely deviate from the presented values due to a variety of factors including, but not limited to, hard and soft cost fluctuations and the actual date of construction for the intended project. Therefore, detailed cost estimates are recommended to validate funding requirements prior to obligating funds for facility replacement or renovation.

Improvement Item

1. Site Work

Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Acres			\$ -	
Excavation/Grade	CUB FT	\$ 20.00	\$ -	
Drainage	LN FT	\$ 60.00	\$ -	
Walks (6 ft wide)	SQ FT	\$ 10.00	\$ -	
Parking	SQ FT	\$ 6.00	\$ -	New paving of access roads & parking in bond
Bus Loading	SQ FT	\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Roads	SQ FT	\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Playing Fields	SQ FT	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Sub-Total			\$ -	

2. Renovations, Exterior

Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Wall Structure	SQ FT	\$ 25.00	\$ -	
Floor Structure	SQ FT	\$ 40.00	\$ -	
Roof Structure	SQ FT	\$ 12.00	\$ -	
Wall Fading	SQ FT		\$ -	
Windows	EACH	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 628,000.00	
Doors/Frames	EACH	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 276,000.00	
Roofing	SQ FT	\$ 20.00	\$ -	
Coping/Parapet	LN FT	\$ 15.00	\$ -	
Painting	SQ FT	\$ 8.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Sub-Total			\$ 904,000.00	

3. Renovations, Interior

Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Floor Covering	SQ FT	\$ 10.00	\$ 800,000.00	
Patch & Painting	SQ FT	\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Ceiling Finish	SQ FT	\$ 12.00	\$ 1,568,400.00	
Plumbing	SQ FT	\$ 24.00	\$ 600,000.00	
Heating/Ventilating	SQ FT	\$ 30.00	\$ 4,505,250.00	Heating & Cooling Included
Air Conditioning	SQ FT		\$ -	
Lighting	SQ FT	\$ 5.00	\$ 750,875.00	
Wiring	SQ FT	\$ 6.00	\$ 300,000.00	
Fire Alarm	SQ FT	\$ 2.50	\$ 375,437.50	
Communication System	SQ FT	\$ 6.00	\$ 901,050.00	
Technology		\$ 6.00	\$ -	
Interior Doors	EACH	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 999,000.00	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")			\$ -	
Sub-Total			\$10,800,012.50	

4. Building Additions Including Furniture, Furnishings & Equipment

Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Administration (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT	\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Student Services (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT	\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Kindergarten (ES)	SQ FT	\$ 150.00	\$ -	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

Primary (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Media Center (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Basic (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Reading (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 140.00	\$ -	
Health Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Computer Lab (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Inst. Mat. Center (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Home Economics (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Art (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Ind. Technology (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Music (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Physical Education (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 130.00	\$ -	
Auditorium (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Special Education (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Multi-Purpose (ES)	SQ FT		\$ 115.00	\$ -	
Kitchen (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 220.00	\$ -	
Dining (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Business Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Co-Op Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 170.00	\$ -	
Drivers Education (MS)	SQ FT		\$ 150.00	\$ -	
Staff/Faculty (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 120.00	\$ -	
Toilets/Fixtures (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 175.00	\$ -	
Storage-General (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Storage Instructional (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 75.00	\$ -	
Custodial (ES, MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 80.00	\$ -	
Mechanical (MS, HS)	SQ FT		\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Subtotal of Building Additions (SQ FT)		0		\$ -	
Circulation	30%	0		\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

5. Special Construction	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Elevator	EACH	1	\$150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	
Sprinkler Systems	SQ FT	150,175	\$ 2.00	\$ 300,350.00	Maintenance & upgrades
Kitchen Equipment	ALL	1	\$300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	
Waste Treatment	EACH		\$600,000.00	\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ 750,350.00	

6. Other Special Costs	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
			\$ -	
Sub-Total			\$ -	
Sub-Total of Items 1 through 6			\$12,454,362.50	

7. Architectural/Engineering Fees	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks
New Construction			\$ -	
Renovations	8.0%	\$12,454,363.00	\$ 996,349.04	
Sub-Total			\$ 996,349.04	

8. Miscellaneous	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Item Cost	Remarks
Survey	EACH			\$ -	
Soil Inv.	EACH			\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Other (Describe in "Remarks")				\$ -	
Sub-Total				\$ -	

9. Contingencies	%	Quantity	Item Cost	Remarks
New Construction			\$ -	
Renovations	6.0%	\$12,454,363.00	\$ 747,261.78	

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

9. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for Roane County High School

Sub-Total \$ 747,261.78

Grand Total Project Cost	\$14,197,973.32

Worksheet Links:

[Campus Information](#)
[Building 1](#)
[Building 2](#)
[Building 3](#)
[Building 4](#)
[Building 5](#)
[Building 6](#)
[Building 7](#)
[Building 8](#)
[Building 9](#)
[Building 10](#)
[Site Evaluation](#)
[Facility General Information](#)
[Building Component Evaluation](#)
[Facility Spaces Evaluation / Utilization Analysis](#)
[School Improvement Cost Summary](#)

Reference Data from Prior Sheets (for WVDE Use Only):	
Energy Utilization Index:	57,120
Current Enrollment:	617
Program Capacity:	1,188
Utilization Calculation:	52%
Building(s) in Floodplain/Floodway:	0

Source: 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan

Appendix of Supporting Data

10. Supporting Photographs for Geary Elementary/Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

10. Supporting Photographs for Geary Elementary/Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

10. Supporting Photographs for Geary Elementary/Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

11. Supporting Photographs for Walton Elementary/Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

11. Supporting Photographs for Walton Elementary/Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

11. Supporting Photographs for Walton Elementary/Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

12. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Elementary School



Appendix of Supporting Data

12. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Elementary School



Appendix of Supporting Data

12. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Elementary School



Appendix of Supporting Data

13. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

13. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

13. Supporting Photographs for Spencer Middle School



Appendix of Supporting Data

14. Supporting Photographs for Roane County High School



Appendix of Supporting Data

14. Supporting Photographs for Roane County High School



Appendix of Supporting Data

14. Supporting Photographs for Roane County High School



Appendix of Supporting Data

20. 2024 – 2025 October 1st certified enrollment for Roane County Schools

School Navigation [SSCH.201]

Student Info > SIS Admin

Student Lookup Name, birthdate, parent, etc. District Roane County Schools School 001 | Roane County Schools Set as default Year 24-25 Term Full Year

Home > Collections > Data Collection Dashboard

District certification is complete. Use the dropdown to switch between the Current Data view and the Certified Data view. Select a bucket in the left panel to see breakdowns of the total.

Data Collections Details Submit / Certify Enrollment | All Schools | Totals | 1630

All Schools October Collection for Selected FY Certified Data

Enrollment	1630																	
FTE	1616.995																	
Excluded	3																	
Special Education	327																	
English Learners	2																	
Low SES	826																	
Title I Low SES	826																	
Homeless	185																	
Unenrolled	168																	

	Pre-K	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Totals
Services Roane County															
Roane County Schools															
Geary Elementary/Middle School	19	22	24	18	24	18	14	23	25	13					200
Spencer Elementary School	63	65	84	71	71	59									413
Walton Elementary/Middle School	21	22	21	24	18	27	20	24	24	27					228
Spencer Middle School							71	73	81	74					299
Roane County High											147	136	96	111	490
Totals	103	109	129	113	113	104	105	120	130	114	147	136	96	111	1630

Activate Go to Settings

Appendix of Supporting Data

To be added: Proof of Legal Advertisement, Hearing Documentation

SBA 301-C

School Closing and Consolidation Timeline			
30 Days Before Public Hearing	3 Weeks Before Public Hearing	Public Hearing For a Closing or Consolidation	Public Hearing Completion and Other Approval Deadlines
Public Postings	Legal Advertisement		
3.1.d. 10 Days before public posting, the WVDE shall receive a draft of the impact statements and supporting data. 3.1. The county board shall prepare Impact Statements and Supporting Data concerning the proposed school closings or consolidations to be submitted to the WVBE for approval in accordance with policy 6204 and WV Code. 3.1.a. Public Postings Be available for public inspection in the office of the county superintendent during the thirty days preceding the date of the public hearing. 3.1.b. Notification Be delivered to the principal and LSIC chair of both closing and receiving schools. 3.3.e. Employee Postings Notice for public hearing shall be posted in all schools, bus garages, and maintenance areas.	3.3. Legal Notice The county board must provide notice for the public hearing which shall be advertised through a class III legal advertisement for three weeks prior to the date of the hearing in a qualified newspaper (as defined by the WV Secretary of State) in general circulation in the locality of any school to be closed or consolidated and in the locality of any school that has been designated by the county board to receive students from the schools to be closed or consolidated.	3.4.a. Public Hearing 1. Should be scheduled for a reasonable time, not to begin before 9:00am nor continue beyond 11:00pm. 2. At least a quorum of the county board members and the county superintendent from the county shall attend and be present at the public hearing(s). 3. A separate hearing shall be held for each school closed or consolidated and the schools designated to receive students shall also hold hearing(s). 4. More that one hearing may be held during a given day. 3.4.d. County Board Vote on Proposed Action After all provisions and hearings have been completed, county boards of education must take a formal vote on the closure(s).	3.4. Deadlines County boards of education must complete the hearing requirements on or before December 31st of the calendar year prior to the calendar year in which the closures or consolidations are to be effective. Locally funded projects related to a closure or consolidation must complete the process prior to initiation of construction. SBA Needs applications Before a project will be considered by the School Building Authority of WV, a school that is planned for closure, as part of their Needs Submission, shall have had its stated closure approved by the WVBE. 5.0. Technical Assistance When planning a school closure, counties should seek technical assistance from the WVDE before their public hearing.

This timeline (revised 9/13/23) is provided by the WVDE as a technical assistance tool for county boards to use in the preparation of planning their actions for a proposed school closure or consolidation. This timeline does not reduce or eliminate the requirements found in WV State Code or WVBE Policy 6204 as they relate to school closures or consolidations. This document does not replace or supplant legal assistance provided by counsel engaged to represent the county.

The Times Record
The Roane County Reporter

P.O. Box 2000
Clarksburg, WV 26302
Phone: 304-626-1420
Fax: 304-624-0651

Advertising Invoice

ROANE CO SCHOOLS
813 CAPITOL ST
SPENCER, WV 25276

Acct#:75316
Ad#:1485825
Phone#:304-927-6405
Date:11/11/2025

Salesperson: CHARDY

Classification: Roane Co Reporter Legal

Ad Size: 1.0 x 910.0

Advertisement Information: NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

Description	Start	Stop	Ins.	Cost/Day	Total
Roane Co Reporter Classified	10/03/2025	10/24/2025	4	61.43	245.70
Affidavit Fee	-	-	-	-	10.00

Payment Information:

Date:	Order#	Type
09/19/2025	1485825	BILLED ACCOUNT

Total Amount: 255.70

Amount Due: 255.70

Attention: Please return the top portion of this invoice with your payment including account and ad number.

Ad Copy

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

PROPOSED CLOSURE OF GEARY AND WALTON ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THEIR GRADES K-5 INTO SPENCER ELEMENTARY, AND THEIR GRADES 6-8 INTO SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF PRE-K STUDENTS FROM ALL SCHOOLS INTO THE TO THE SPACE NOW OCCUPIED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AT ROANE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

ROANE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Roane County Board of Education will hold five public hearings on the Superintendent's recommendation to close Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools at the end of the 2025-26 school year, and consolidate their K-5 students into Spencer Elementary and their 6-8 grade students into Spencer Middle School, and consolidate all Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services located at Roane County High School. Public hearings will be held at the following locations, dates, and times listed below:

• **LOCATION:** WALTON ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOL, 90 School Drive, Walton, WV 25286
DATE AND TIME: Monday, October 27, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

• **LOCATION:** GEARY ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOL, 9538 Clay Rd, Lethand, WV 25251
DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

• **LOCATION:** SPENCER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 85 Clay Road, Spencer, WV, 25276
DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

• **LOCATION:** SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL, 2 Raider Way, Spencer, WV 25276
DATE AND TIME: Monday, November 3, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

• **LOCATION:** ROANE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, 1 Raider Way, Spencer, WV 25276
DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

If, at the time a hearing is called to order, the Board determines that the location is of insufficient size to accommodate all who desire to attend, the hearing will be recessed and moved to a new location of sufficient size to accommodate all those who desire to attend. If that happens, the new meeting location will be posted at the original meeting location.

If a public hearing is not completed by 11:00 p.m., it will be recessed, to be continued on a date and a time designated and announced by the Board just prior to the hearing recess, to be continued day-to-day until concluded. The public hearings, as well as any reconvened session of the public hearings, shall end at the conclusion of each hearing's business or at 11:00 p.m., whichever occurs earlier.

ALTERNATE DATES AND TIMES

If, due to inclement weather or other cause, any hearing cannot be held on the scheduled date, the hearing will be held at the same location as originally scheduled, but on the following dates and times:

- Walton Elementary Middle School, Thursday, October 30, 2025, beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- Geary Elementary Middle School, Saturday, November 1, 2025 beginning at 9:00 a.m.
- Spencer Elementary School, Saturday, November 1, 2025 beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- Spencer Middle School, Wednesday, November 5, 2025, beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- Roane County High School, Thursday, November 6, 2025, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

If for any reason a hearing cannot be conducted on the alternate dates or times listed, the Board will determine a date and time.

HEARING PROCEDURES

For a period of 30 minutes prior to the commencement of a public hearing, persons shall register at the hearing location for the purpose of making statements, offering testimony, and questioning school officials concerning the proposals. Each hearing will begin with an oral summary by a representative of Roane County Schools on the reasons and supporting data in connection with the proposed action by the Board. Speakers will then be recognized in the order in which they registered. Each speaker shall be limited to 5 minutes unless, in accordance with Board Policy 020, the President reduces that time limit to provide all persons wishing to speak the opportunity to do so.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN MATERIAL

The Board will consider any written material submitted by members of the public concerning the proposals if the material, with 6 copies, is submitted to and received by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 813 Capitol Street, Spencer, WV 25276, before 12:00 p.m. on Friday, October 24, 2025.

REASONS AND SUPPORTING DATA

Until the date of the first hearing, written reasons for the Superintendent's recommendation in the form of an Impact Statement and Supporting Data are available for public inspection in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 813 Capitol Street, Spencer, WV 25276, on weekdays between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

FINAL ACTION

The Board of Education will take formal action on the Superintendent's proposal to close Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and consolidate their K-5 students into existing Spencer Elementary School, their 6-8 students into existing Spencer Middle School, and all Pre-K students from all schools into the area currently operated by the Office of Student Services located at Roane County High School at its regular meeting at Roane County High

School, 1 Raider Way, Spencer WV 25276, on Thursday, November 6, 2025 beginning at 6:00 p.m. If, due to inclement weather or other cause, the Board meeting cannot be held on the scheduled date, the meeting will be held at the same location and time as originally scheduled, but on Friday, November 7, 2025.

Michelle D. Stellato
Superintendent
Roane County Schools

Newspaper: WV News - Roane County Reporter
First Run: Friday, October 3, 2025
Second Run: Friday, October 10, 2025
Third Run: Friday, October 17, 2025
Fourth Run: Friday, October 24, 2025

PUBLISHER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Tamra Lawson
Classified Manager of THE ROANE COUNTY
REPORTER, a newspaper of general circulation
published in the city of Spencer, County and state
aforesaid, do hereby certify that the annexed:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ad# 1485825

was published in THE ROANE COUNTY
REPORTER 4 time(s) commencing on 10/03/2025
and ending on 10/24/2025 at the request of

ROANE CO SCHOOLS.

Given under my hand this 10/24/2025.

The publisher's fee for said publication is: \$255.70.



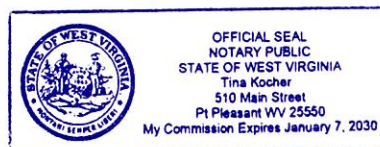
Classified Manager of
THE ROANE COUNTY REPORTER

Subscribed to and sworn to before me this
10/24/2025



Notary Public in and for Roane County, WV

My commission expires on
The 7th day of Jan 2030



Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Annette Claypool, principal of Spencer
Middle School School, certify that I have
received in duplicate copy the Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact
Statement and Supporting Data on this 24th day of September, 2025.

Additionally, I Annette Claypool, principal of Spencer
Middle School School, certify that I have
received and posted in conspicuous working areas thorough my school, copies of the legal
notice informing professional and service personnel of the closure and consolidation
proposal and scheduled hearings.

Principal Printed Name: Annette Claypool
Signature: Annette Claypool Date: 9-24-25

Witness Printed Name: Alicia B. Coon
Signature: Alicia B. Coon Date: 9-24-25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato
Signature: Michelle Stellato Date: 9-24-25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Holly Terrell, President of the
Spencer Middle School Local School

Improvement Council (LSIC), certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane
County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact
Statement and Supporting Data on this 24th day of September, 2025.

LSIC President Printed Name:

Signature:

Holly Terrell
Holly Terrell Date: 9/24/25

Witness Printed Name:

Signature:

Gabriel Cohen
Gabriel Cohen Date: 9/24/2025

Superintendent Printed Name:

Signature:

Michelle Stellato
Michelle Stellato Date: 9/24/25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Kevin Carr, principal of Walton
Elementary Middle School School, certify that I have
received in duplicate copy the Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact
Statement and Supporting Data on this 24 day of September, 2025.

Additionally, I Kevin Carr, principal of Walton
Elementary Middle School, certify that I have
received and posted in conspicuous working areas thorough my school, copies of the legal
notice informing professional and service personnel of the closure and consolidation
proposal and scheduled hearings.

Principal Printed Name: Kevin Carr
Signature: Kevin Carr Date: 9/24/25

Witness Printed Name: Amy Morris
Signature: Amy Morris Date: 9/24/25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato
Signature: Michelle Stellato Date: 9/24/25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I TIFFANY RAINES, President of the
WALTON ELEMENTARY MIDDLE School Local School
Improvement Council (LSIC), certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane
County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact
Statement and Supporting Data on this 24 day of September, 2025.

LSIC President Printed Name: TIFFANY RAINES
Signature: [Signature] Date: 9/24/25

Witness Printed Name: CORRIE Ota
Signature: [Signature] Date: 9/24/25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato
Signature: [Signature] Date: 9/24/25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Lindsay Brabham, President of the
Spencer Elementary School Local School
Improvement Council (LSIC), certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane
County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact
Statement and Supporting Data on this 24th day of September, 2025.

LSIC President Printed Name: Lindsay Brabham
Signature: Lindsay Brabham Date: 9/24/2025

Witness Printed Name: Corrie Ota
Signature: Corrie Ota Date: 9/24/25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato
Signature: Michelle Stellato Date: 9/24/25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Lori Hamric Cottrell, principal of Spencer Elementary School School, certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact Statement and Supporting Data on this 24th day of September, 2025.

Additionally, I Lori Hamric Cottrell, principal of Spencer Elementary School, certify that I have received and posted in conspicuous working areas thorough my school, copies of the legal notice informing professional and service personnel of the closure and consolidation proposal and scheduled hearings.

Principal Printed Name: Lori Hamric Cottrell
Signature: Lori Hamric Cottrell Date: 9/24/25

Witness Printed Name: Lorra Tanner
Signature: Lorra Tanner Date: 9-24-25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Bellato
Signature: Michelle Bellato Date: 9.24.25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Jackie Higginbotham, President of the
Geary Elementary Middle School Local School
Improvement Council (LSIC), certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane
County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact
Statement and Supporting Data on this 24th day of September, 2025.

LSIC President Printed Name: Jackie Higginbotham
Signature: Jackie Higginbotham Date: 9-24-25

Witness Printed Name: Valerie Mace
Signature: Valerie Mace Date: 9-24-25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato
Signature: Michelle Stellato Date: 9-24-25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Megan Starcher, principal of Geary Elementary Middle School, certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact Statement and Supporting Data on this 24th day of September, 2025.

Additionally, I Megan Starcher, principal of Geary Elementary Middle School, certify that I have received and posted in conspicuous working areas thorough my school, copies of the legal notice informing professional and service personnel of the closure and consolidation proposal and scheduled hearings.

Principal Printed Name: Megan Starcher
Signature: Megan Starcher Date: 9/24/25

Witness Printed Name: Amanda Legg
Signature: Amanda Legg Date: 9/24/25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato
Signature: Michelle Stellato Date: 9/24/25

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Suzanne Rector, President of the
Roane County High School School Local School
Improvement Council (LSIC), certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane
County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact
Statement and Supporting Data on this 24 day of September, 2025.

LSIC President Printed Name: Suzanne Rector
Signature: Suzanne Rector Date: 9/24/2025

Witness Printed Name: Sarah Westlake
Signature: Sarah Westlake Date: 9/24/2025

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato
Signature: Michelle Stellato Date: 9/24/2025

Receipt of Impact Statement, Supporting Data, and Legal Notices
Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Proposal
September 24, 2025

I Jennifer N. Hunt, principal of Roane County High School School, certify that I have received in duplicate copy the Roane County Schools Closure and Consolidation Impact Statement and Supporting Data on this 24th day of September, 2025.

Additionally, I Jennifer N. Hunt, principal of Roane County High School School, certify that I have received and posted in conspicuous working areas thorough my school, copies of the legal notice informing professional and service personnel of the closure and consolidation proposal and scheduled hearings.

Principal Printed Name: Jennifer N. Hunt

Signature: Jennifer N. Hunt Date: 9/24/25
JNH

Witness Printed Name: Robin L. Stump

Signature: Robin L. Stump Date: 9/24/25

Superintendent Printed Name: Michelle Stellato

Signature: Michelle Stellato Date: 9/24/2025

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY OF
ROANE, HELD OCTOBER 27, 2025, AT 5:00 PM, AT WALTON ELEMENTARY /
MIDDLE SCHOOL, WALTON, WEST VIRGINIA**

Present: Dennis Carpenter, Daris Harper, Jeffrey Mace, James Minney, Eileen Richardson

Absent: (none)

Meeting called to order by Jeffrey Mace (5:00 pm)

This meeting could be joined remotely. The public could join by calling 1-304-553-7794 and entering the provided conference ID or on Microsoft Teams using the provided link.

Conduct public hearing for the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School

1. Public Participation

Corrie Ota set the public participation sign-in sheet out at 4:30 pm and it was removed at 5:00 pm.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions/shared concerns regarding the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools:

Joe Weiland, Tiffany Raines, Wendy Looney, Cindy Berry, Gemini Carpenter, Chad Perkins, Justin Shears, Madison Sergent, Sheila Chapman, Shelli Ellis, Steve Ellis, Linda Ashley, Lisa Messineo, Ashley Glaspell, Gabe Boggs, Rachel Hays, Sierra Thaxton, Nona Perkins and Makynlee Patton.

Adjournment

1. Adjourn until the special board meeting on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 5:00 pm at Geary Elementary Middle School. The next regular board meeting is on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Roane County High School.

Motion by Dennis Carpenter and seconded by James Minney to approve. Motion carried. (8:00 pm)

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY OF
ROANE, HELD OCTOBER 28, 2025, AT 5:00 PM, AT GEARY ELEMENTARY /
MIDDLE SCHOOL, LEFT HAND, WEST VIRGINIA**

Present: Dennis Carpenter, Daris Harper, Jeffrey Mace, James Minney, Eileen Richardson

Absent: (none)

Meeting called to order by Jeffrey Mace (5:00 pm)

This meeting could be joined remotely. The public could join by calling 1-304-553-7794 and entering the provided conference ID or on Microsoft Teams using the provided link.

Conduct public hearing for the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School

1. Public Participation

Corrie Ota set the public participation sign-in sheet out at 4:30 pm and it was removed at 5:00 pm.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions/shared concerns regarding the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools:

Megan Starcher, Joe Weiland, Velvet Nichols, Ranessa Nichols, Justin Shears, Linda Drennen, Carrie Bragg, Yawana Surface, Lidia Surface, Lana Underwood, Michelle McPherson, Jackie Higginbotham, Benjamin Shamblin, Chad Perkins, Valerie Mace, Lea Runnion, Sophie Ashby, Daphne Smith, Linda Keaton, Stephanie Cowger, Susan Beard, Evelyn Shears, Joe Ross, Macy Brohard, Jessica Boggs, Terra Keen-Smith, Gabe Boggs, Kevin Hall, Dixie Jacobson and Janetta May. Terri Myers decided not to speak after signing up.

Adjournment

1. Adjourn until the special board meeting on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at 5:00 pm at Spencer Elementary School. The next regular board meeting is on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Roane County High School.

Motion by Daris Harper and seconded by Dennis Carpenter to approve. Motion carried. (8:59 pm)

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE, HELD OCTOBER 29, 2025, AT 5:00 PM, AT SPENCER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA

Present: Dennis Carpenter, Daris Harper, Jeffrey Mace, James Minney, Eileen Richardson

Absent: (none)

Meeting called to order by Jeffrey Mace (5:00 pm)

This meeting could be joined remotely. The public could join by calling 1-304-553-7794 and entering the provided conference ID or on Microsoft Teams using the provided link.

Conduct public hearing for the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School

1. Public Participation

Corrie Ota set the public participation sign-in sheet out at 4:30 pm and it was removed at 5:00 pm.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions/shared concerns regarding the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools:

Lori Hamric Cottrell, Danylle Popp, Joe Weiland, Denise Holliday, Corena Dolan, Chad Perkins, Gabe Boggs, Rick Atkinson, Justin Shears, Kevin Hall and Rachel Stepp.

Adjournment

1. Adjourn until the special board meeting on Monday, November 3, 2025, at 5:00 pm at Spencer Middle School. The next regular board meeting is on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Roane County High School.

Motion by Eileen Richardson and seconded by James Minney to approve. Motion carried. (7:07 pm)

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE, HELD NOVEMBER 3, 2025, AT 5:00 PM, AT SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL, SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA

Present: Dennis Carpenter, Daris Harper, Jeffrey Mace, James Minney, Eileen Richardson

Absent: (none)

Meeting called to order by Jeffrey Mace (5:00 pm)

This meeting could be joined remotely. The public could join by calling 1-304-553-7794 and entering the provided conference ID or on Microsoft Teams using the provided link.

Conduct public hearing for the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School

1. Public Participation

Corrie Ota set the public participation sign-in sheet out at 4:30 pm and it was removed at 5:00 pm.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions/shared concerns regarding the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools:

Annette Claypool, Jeanette Atkinson, Deana Kendall, Cathy Craddock, Jonah Rector, Hattie Perkins, Nona Perkins, Ben Shamblin, Justin Shears, JuliAnna Penfold, Andrea Hays, Gabe Boggs, Rachel Hays, Lisa Messineo and Joe Messineo.

Adjournment

1. Adjourn until the special board meeting on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 5:00 pm at Roane County High School. The next regular board meeting is on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Roane County High School.

Motion by Daris Harper and seconded by Eileen Richardson to approve. Motion carried. (7:02 pm)

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY OF
ROANE, HELD NOVEMBER 4, 2025, AT 5:00 PM, AT ROANE COUNTY HIGH
SCHOOL, SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA**

Present: Dennis Carpenter, Daris Harper, Jeffrey Mace, James Minney, Eileen Richardson

Absent: (none)

Meeting called to order by Jeffrey Mace (5:00 pm)

This meeting could be joined remotely. The public could join by calling 1-304-553-7794 and entering the provided conference ID or on Microsoft Teams using the provided link.

Conduct public hearing for the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School

1. Public Participation

Corrie Ota set the public participation sign-in sheet out at 4:30 pm and it was removed at 5:00 pm.

The following members of the public spoke and asked questions/shared concerns regarding the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools:

Jennifer Hunt, Joe Rector, Gary King, Chad Perkins, T.C. Torre, Valerie Mace, Gabe Boggs and Rachel Hays.

Adjournment

- 1. Adjourn until the next regular board meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Roane County High School.**

Motion by Dennis Carpenter and seconded by Daris Harper to approve. Motion carried. (6:14 pm)

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE, HELD NOVEMBER 6, 2025, AT 6:00 PM, AT ROANE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA

Present: Dennis Carpenter, Daris Harper, Jeffrey Mace, James Minney, Eileen Richardson

Absent: (none)

Meeting called to order by James Minney (6:03 pm)

This meeting could be joined remotely. The public could join by calling 1-304-553-7794 and entering the provided conference ID or on Microsoft Teams using the provided link.

Presentations

1. Superintendent Spotlight

a. RCHS Band

Band Director Hope Staats, and students Colleen Bloom, Braxton Nichols, and Morgan Spencer presented highlights of the Roane County High School Marching Band's successful season, including multiple first-place awards and a Division Two Grand Champion title at the Winfield High School Band Festival.

The board also recognized and thanked veterans in attendance for their service and acknowledged the support provided by their families.

2. Public Participation

Corrie Ota set the public participation sign-in sheet out at 5:45 pm and it was removed at 5:55 pm.

The following members of the public spoke:

Tiffany Raines, Justin Shears, Rachel Hays and Katelyn Samples.

New Business for Consideration and Potential Action

1. Update on Roane County Schools' State of Emergency

The Superintendent gave an update on the state of emergency, noting progress including the ongoing special education audit, which concludes November 12. The final hearing required under Section 6204 has been completed, and the board now moves into the decision-making phase. An official update will be presented at the December 10 State Board meeting.

Treasurer, Ann Hardman, presented a detailed report, noting that fiscal year 2025 ended with a \$1,386,462 deficit. Despite extensive cuts and combining positions, the district still faces a projected deficit of \$490,789 for the current year. Approximately 80% of the budget is tied to personnel, and \$577,699 in restricted state funds for buses, textbooks, supplies, and technology has already been used for salaries. Even with these measures, the district remains unable to balance the budget and keep a 3% reserve of \$572,486, which is required by the state. Upcoming required expenses include \$362,169 for bus replacements and \$553,404 for new iPads and MacBooks, bringing the total funding gap to about \$3.88 million. The continued operation under the current structure is unsustainable and she recommended proceeding with school closures and consolidation to prevent state intervention and protect the district's long-term stability.

The Superintendent expressed appreciation for all participants in the hearings and acknowledged the difficult decisions ahead. After reviewing the facts and financial realities, the leadership team unanimously recommended moving forward with school closures and consolidation to prevent further fiscal decline and ensure educational continuity for approximately 1,500 students. The Superintendent emphasized that while conditions remain challenging, the district is committed to sustainable solutions, including exploring charter options and hosting a statewide funding formula work session on November 17. The recommendation to adopt the motion reflects the need to preserve decision-making authority and secure the future of Roane County Schools.

2. Vote on proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School

Board Member Eileen Richardson, thanked attendees and stressed that no one wants to close schools, but a decision is necessary. She noted that delaying could allow recovery but would require community support, and urged collaboration on a cost-saving plan for next year.

Board Vice President James Minney, voiced concern about state policies harming rural schools and clarified that no board member has been pressured on closure decisions. He addressed rumors of stolen funds, confirming audits found all money was spent within Roane County Schools. Minney acknowledged long bus rides but expressed confidence in safety and thanked staff and community for their efforts during the process.

Board Member Daris Harper acknowledged past voting decisions and emphasized that no funds were intentionally mismanaged. He noted the severity of the current deficit and the need to ensure employees are paid and students receive an education, even if programs like music, art, and FFA may face cuts. Harper stated that while long bus rides are a concern, difficult decisions must be made to avoid worse outcomes and urged community support through the process.

Board Member Dennis Carpenter reflected on his long service to the district, acknowledging that declining enrollment and past financial decisions have led to a \$1.5-\$2.5 million deficit. He suggested that the loss of trust and lack of appreciation were contributing factors to the increased staff turnover and the reason families were leaving public schools. Though personally opposed to consolidation, he said members must follow state laws and make difficult choices to ensure fiscal stability. He encouraged unity and rebuilding trust after the vote, noting that allowing the state to intervene would be easier but not the right decision.

Board President Jeff Mace thanked Superintendent Stellatto, staff, and the public for their work and participation during a difficult period. He acknowledged the hardship of recent decisions, saying the board has questioned its actions but remains committed to doing what's best for students. Mace noted that outdated state funding formulas and new mandates have placed unfair burdens on rural counties, leaving limited options. He accepted responsibility on behalf of the board and urged the community to stay united and support students, staff, and schools as the district works toward recovery.

Motion by James Minney and seconded by Dennis Carpenter to approve the closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School and to consolidate their

grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School to be effective at the end of the current 2025-2026 school year and the Superintendent, on the Board's behalf, will submit to the West Virginia Department of Education a request to amend the School District Comprehensive Educational Facility Plan and request for a waiver to Policy 4336. Motion carried. Eileen Richardson opposed. (7:46 pm)

- a. Policy 4336 Waiver Request
- b. Amendment of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP)
3. Ratify suspension of Amber Lambert, substitute cook, RCS, without pay, effective October 22, 2025. Return date will be determined by superintendent.

It was noted that the employee did not request a hearing.

Motion by Daris Harper and seconded by Dennis Carpenter to to go into closed session, as per WV Code 6-9A-4(b)(2)(A), to discuss suspension. Motion carried. (8:01 pm)

Motion by Eileen Richardson and seconded by Daris Harper to return to open session. Motion carried. No action was taken in closed session. (8:09 pm)

Motion by James Minney and seconded by Daris Harper to ratify the suspension of Amber Lambert, substitute cook, RCS, without pay, effective October 22, 2025. Return date will be determined by superintendent. Motion carried. (8:10 pm)

Consent Agenda - (Action)

1. Approval of minutes of regular board meeting on October 21, 2025 and special meetings on October 27, 2025, October 28, 2025, October 29, 2025, November 3, 2025 and November 4, 2025.

Motion by Dennis Carpenter and seconded by Daris Harper to approve. Motion carried. (8:25 pm)

2. Finance
 - a. Transfers/supplements to the budget
 - b. Payments of bills as submitted; pre-approval to release checks not to exceed \$20,000 prior to the next board meeting
3. Policies
 - a. First Reading
 - i. Policy 491 (revised)
 - b. Waiver Request
 - i. WVBE Policy 6200 - Waiver Request - Walton Elementary Middle School LSIC
4. Contract(s) / Bid(s) / Agreement(s)
 - a. MOU with PATCH
5. Field Trips
6. Volunteers
 - a. Spencer Elementary School
 - i. David P Starcher II
7. Student Transfers

- a. 2 student transfers from Kanawha County Schools
- b. 2 student transfers from Calhoun County Schools

Personnel Consent Agenda - (Action)

Motion by James Minney and seconded by Eileen Richardson to approve the following personnel items as recommended by Michelle Stellato, Superintendent. Motion carried. (8:30 pm)

1. Create New Position(s)
 - a. Teacher / Special Education, Itinerant (SES), 200 days, effective November 7, 2025
2. Resignation(s)
 - a. Ducasse, Jermaine - Assistant Coach, Girls Basketball (Roane County High School), effective November 7, 2025
3. New Employment(s)
 - a. Clayton, Jaylin - Substitute teacher (RCS - Substitutes), effective November 7, 2025
 - b. Ellis, Heather - Substitute aide (RCS - Substitutes), effective November 7, 2025
 - c. Lowe, Vietta - Substitute teacher (RCS - Substitutes), effective November 7, 2025
 - d. Matics, Sandra - Aide / Autism Mentor (Spencer Middle School), effective January 2, 2026
4. Transfer(s)
 - a. Popp, Danylle - Teacher / Pre-K (Spencer Elementary School) to Coordinator of Special Educator Support & Transitions (RCS - Central Office), effective December 1, 2025
 - b. Hughes, Michael - General Maintenance (multi-classified with Bus Operator) (RCS - Operations) to Mechanic (multi-classified with Bus Operator) (RCS - Operations), effective January 2, 2026
 - c. Starcher, Warren - Bus Operator (Bus #15) (RCS - Operations) to Bus Operator (Bus #24) (RCS - Operations), effective January 2, 2026
5. Extracurricular(s)
 - a. Underwood, Lana - SOAR After School Teacher (Geary Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - b. Karickhoff, Misty - Coach, Cheer (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - c. Boggs, Rebecca - SOAR After School Lead Teacher (Geary Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - d. Raynor-Sears, Dawn - SOAR After School Teacher (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - e. May, Lori - SOAR After School Lead Teacher (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - f. Merrell, Kimberly - SOAR After School Lead Teacher (Spencer Elementary

- School), effective November 7, 2025
- g. Myers, Kristen - SOAR After School Teacher (Spencer Elementary School), effective November 7, 2025
 - h. Rhodes, Jason - SOAR After School Bus Driver (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - i. McGlothlin, Lisa - SOAR After School Bus Driver (Geary Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - j. Vannoy, Matthew - SOAR After School Bus Driver (Spencer Elementary School), effective November 7, 2025
 - k. Matheney, Lora - Assistant Coach, Girls Basketball (Roane County High School), effective November 7, 2025
 - l. Hoskins, Carrie - Transportation Aide (morning, Bus #28) (RCS - Operations), effective January 2, 2026

Reports of Committees

- 1. Walton Elementary Middle School Faculty Senate Minutes (10/22/25)

Superintendent's Remarks

The Superintendent concluded by acknowledging the challenges facing Roane County Schools and emphasized the commitment to move forward with resolve. Despite limited staff and ongoing conditions, the leadership team pledged to continue working for the benefit of students, parents, and the community, with the goal of leaving the district in a better position than when they assumed their roles.

Adjournment

- 1. Adjourn until the next regular board meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Roane County High School.

Motion by Dennis Carpenter and seconded by Daris Harper to approve. Motion carried. (8:34 pm)

Public Hearings for the Proposed Closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools

Location: Walton Elementary Middle School

Date & Time: Monday, October 27, 2025, 5:00 pm

	Name	Subject	Signature
✓ 1	Joe Weiland	Don't close schools	Joe Weiland
✓ 2	Tiffany Eames	WEMS	Tiffany
✓ 3	Wendy Looney	WEMS-DO NOT Close	Wendy Looney
✓ 4	Cindy Berry	WEMS- DO NOT CLOSE	Cindy
✓ 5	Gemini Carpenter	SCHOOL closure	Gemini Carpenter
✓ 6	CHAD PERKINS	Impact Statement	Chad
✓ 7	JUSTIN SHEARS	IMPACT STATEMENT (TRANSPORTATION)	Justin Shears
✓ 8	Madison Sargent	Impact Statement	Madison Sargent
✓ 9	Andrea Lawson	WEMS closure	Andrea Lawson
✓ 10	Sheila Chapman	Impact Statement	Sheila Chapman
✓ 11	Shelli Ellis	WEMS closure	Shelli Ellis
✓ 12	STEVE ELLIS	WEMS CLOSURE	Steve Ellis
✓ 13	Linda Ashley	RCRUE	Linda Ashley
✓ 14	Lisa Messineo	WEMS + Geary Closure	Lisa Messineo
✓ 15	Ashley Alaspell	School Closure	Ashley Alaspell
✓ 16	Gebe Bays	Current Hearing	Gebe Bays
✓ 17	Rachel Flays	consolidation	Rachel Flays
✓ 18	Sierra Thornton	consol.	Sierra Thornton
✓ 19	Nona Perkins	consolidation	Nona Perkins
✓ 20	Makynlee Patton	consolidation	Makynlee Patton
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			

PAGE 1

Public Hearings for the Proposed Closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools

Location: Geary Elementary Middle School

Date & Time: Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 5:00 pm

	Name	Subject	Signature
✓ 1	Megan Starcher	School Closure	Megan Starcher
✓ 2	JOE W ELLIOTT	School closure	Joe Elliott
✓ 3	Velvet Nichols	School closure	Velvet Nichols
✓ 4	Ranessa Nichols	School closure	Ranessa Nichols
✓ 5	JUSTIN SHEARS	SCHOOL CLOSURE (IMPACT ST)	Justin Shears
✓ 6	Linda Drenth	" "	Linda Drenth
✓ 7	Came Bragg	" "	Came Bragg
✓ 8	Yawana Surface	" "	Yawana Surface
✓ 9	Lidia Surface	" "	Lidia Surface
✓ 10	Lana Underwood	" "	Lana Underwood
✓ 11	Michelle McPherson	impact statement questions	Michelle McPherson
✓ 12	Jackie Higginbotham	impact of consolidation	Jackie Higginbotham
✓ 13	Benjamin Shumlin	School Closure	Benjamin Shumlin
✓ 14	CHAD PERKINS	" "	Chad Perkins
✓ 15	Valerie Mace	" "	Valerie Mace
✓ 16	Lea Rummian	" "	Lea Rummian
✓ 17	Sophie Ashby	" "	Sophie Ashby
✓ 18	Daphne Smith	School Closure	Daphne Smith
✓ 19	Linda Keaton	SCHOOL Closure	Linda Keaton
✓ 20	Stephanie Cramer	Closure	Stephanie Cramer
✓ 21	Susan Ward	Opposing closure	Susan Ward
✓ 22	Evelyn Shears	" "	Evelyn Shears
✓ 23	Joe Ross	" "	Joe Ross
✓ 24	Macy Brohard	" "	Macy Brohard
✓ 25	Jessica Boggs	The true impact on students	Jessica Boggs
✓ 26	Terra Jean Smith	" "	Terra Jean Smith
✓ 27	Sarah Boggs	Meeting	Sarah Boggs
✓ 28	Terri Myers Declined to speak	meeting	Terri Myers
✓ 29	Kevin Hall	Impact	Kevin Hall
✓ 30	Dixie Jacobson	" "	Dixie Jacobson

PAGE 2

Public Hearings for the Proposed Closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools

Location: Geary Elementary Middle School

Date & Time: Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 5:00 pm

	Name	Subject	Signature
✓ 31	Janetta C. May	Janetta A. May	Janetta
32			
33			
34			
35			
36			
37			
38			
39			
40			
41			
42			
43			
44			
45			
46			
47			
48			
49			
50			
51			
52			
53			
54			
55			
56			
57			
58			
59			
60			

Public Hearings for the Proposed Closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools

Location: Spencer Elementary School

Date & Time: Wednesday, October 29, 2025, 5:00 pm

	Name	Subject	Signature
✓ 1	Lori Hamric Cottrell	consolidation	Lori Cottrell
✓ 2	Dannyle Popp		Dannyle Popp
✓ 3	JOE WETLAND		Joe Wetland
✓ 4	~~Denise Holliday~~		
✓ 5	Denise Holliday		Denise Holliday
✓ 6	Corona Dolan		Corona Dolan
✓ 7	CHAD PERKINS		Chad Perkins
✓ 8	Gabe Boggs		Gabe Boggs
✓ 9	Rick Atkinson		RICK ATKINSON
✓ 10	JUSTIN SHEARS	CONSOLIDATION	Justin Shears
✓ 11	Kevin Hall		Kevin Hall
✓ 12	Rachel Stepp		Rachel Stepp
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			

Public Hearings for the Proposed Closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools

Location: Spencer Middle School

Date & Time: Monday, November 3, 2025, 5:00 pm

	Name	Subject	Signature
1	Annette Claypool	Principal SMS	Annette Claypool
2	Jeanette Atkinson	Consolidation - Student Safety	Jeanette Atkinson
3	Deana Kendall	Teacher SMS	Deana Kendall
4	Guthy Craddock	Teacher SMS	Guthy Craddock
5	Joseph Bector	Walton transfer SMS	Joseph Bector
6	Hattie Perkins	consolidation	Hattie Perkins
7	Rachel Hays		
8	Andrea Hays		
9	Nona Perkins	consolidation	Nona Perkins
10	BEN SHAMBLIN	Closure	BEN SHAMBLIN
11	JUSTIN SHEARS	CONSOLIDATION	Justin Shears
12	Sul. Anna Pendola	Teacher SIM	Sul. Anna Pendola
13	Andrew Hays	consolidation	Andrew Hays
14	Gabe Baggs	consolidation	Gabe Baggs
15	Rachel Hays	consolidation	Rachel Hays
16	Lisa Messina	"	Lisa Messina
17	JOE MESSIAEO	consolidation	Joe Messina
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			

Public Hearings for the Proposed Closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools

Location: Roane County High School

Date & Time: Tuesday, November 4, 2025, 5:00 pm

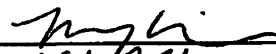
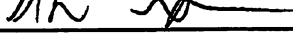
	Name	Subject	Signature
1	✓ Jennifer Hunt		Jennifer Hunt
2	✓ Joe Rector		Joe Rector
3	✓ Gary King		Gary King
4	✓ ~~CIA~~ PERKINS		CP
5	✓ TC Torre		TC Torre
6	✓ Valerie Mace		V. Mace
7	✓ ~~Cathy~~ Bagg		Cathy Bagg
8	Rachel Hays		Rachel Hays
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			

Roane County Schools

Public Participation Registration

Location: Roane County High School

Date & Time: Tuesday, November 6, 2025, 6:00 pm

	Name	Subject	Signature
1	TIFFANY RAINES	CLOSURE/CONSOLIDATION	
2	JUSTIN SHEARS	CLOSURE	
3	Rachel Hays	Closure	
4	Katelyn Samples	Consolidation	
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			

ROANE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA, WALTON ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL

IN RE: CLOSURE AND CONSOLIDATION OF GEARY AND WALTON
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL AND CONSOLIDATION
OF K-5 INTO SPENCER ELEMENTARY AND GRADES
6-8 INTO SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND
CONSOLIDATION OF PRE-K INTO ROANE COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL

PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 27, 2025

5:00 PM

WALTON ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL
90 SCHOOL DRIVE
WALTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Dena Belisle
Certified Court Reporter

CAPITOL CITY REPORTING
"PROFESSIONAL STENOMASK FOR THE RECORD"

POST OFFICE BOX 13253, CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA 25339 • (304) 767-4231

A P P E A R A N C E S

MEMBERS OF THE ROANE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION:

JEFF MACE, PRESIDENT
JAMES MINNEY, VICE PRESIDENT
EILEEN RICHARDSON, MEMBER
DENNIS CARPENTER, MEMBER
DARIS HARPER, MEMBER

MEMBERS OF ROANE COUNTY SCHOOLS:

MICHELLE STELLATO, SUPERINTENDENT
CORRIE OTA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ANN HARDMAN
MICHELLE ASH
LORRA TANNER
AMY COLE
JERRY GARNER

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SIGNED TO SPEAK:

JOE WEILAND
TIFFANY RAINES
WENDY LOONEY
CINDY BERRY
GEMINI CARPENTER
CHAD PERKINS
JUSTIN SHEARS
MADISON SERGENT
SHELIA CHAPMAN
SHELLI ELLIS
STEVE ELLIS
LINDA ASHLEY
LISA MESSINEO
ASHLEY GLASPELL
GABE BOGGS
RACHEL HAYS
SIERRA THAXTON
NONA PERKINS
MAKYNLEE PATTON

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. MACE: The purpose of this special meeting conduct a public hearing for the purpose of the closure of Geary and Walton Elementary/Middle Schools, and the consolidation of their K through 5 grades into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6 through 8 into Spencer Middle School, and the consolidation of pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School.

We are here at the Walton Elementary/Middle School gymnasium. All Board members are present and we do have a quorum. My name is Jeff Mace. As the president of the Roane County Board of Education, I have determined that at least a quorum of the Board and Superintendent are present. It is now after 5:00 o'clock. Registration to address the Board at this public hearing has now closed.

This hearing is convened in accordance with the terms of West Virginia Code § 18-5-13(a), and State Board of Education Policy 6204, in connection with the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary/Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K through 5 into Spencer Elementary and their grades 6 through 8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of

1 Student Support Services at Roane County High School.

2 The statute and the State Board policy provide that
3 members of the public, one, have a right to present, two,
4 have a right to submit their statements and testimony, and
5 three, have a right to question school officials. Members
6 of the public, in the order of sign in, and registration
7 will be allowed to make statements, offer testimony, and
8 ask questions of school officials. A total of 19 members
9 of the public have indicated their desire to submit
10 statements or testimony or to question school officials at
11 this hearing. In order to give every speaker a fair
12 opportunity to submit statements and testimony and to
13 question school officials, five minutes has been allotted
14 for each registered speaker. The responses of the school
15 officials to questions shall not be included in the time
16 allotted. No member of the public may present more than
17 once. No member of the public may grant time to another
18 presenter. Ms. Corrie OTA has been designated as the
19 timekeeper and will advise when one minute is remaining
20 for each presentation and when time has expired. It is
21 not necessary to consume the total amount of the time
22 allotted.

23 As stated in the public notice of this hearing,
24 written statements and materials that were submitted to

1 the superintendent before October 24, 2025 will be given
2 full consideration. That deadline has passed and written
3 materials may not be submitted during this hearing. All
4 questions shall initially be directed to the
5 superintendent. The superintendent may elect to respond
6 to the questions or may delegate another school official
7 to respond to the question. At the conclusion of all
8 presentations by members of the public, the superintendent
9 or another member of the administration will be given the
10 opportunity to respond to any information that has been
11 presented by members of the public. Apart from questions
12 directed to the superintendent and answered by the
13 superintendent or another member of the administration,
14 there will be no dialogue. I'm sorry, there will be no
15 direct debate or dialogue between members of the public
16 and board members or members of the public and school
17 officials.

18 Action on the proposed closure of Geary and Walton
19 Elementary/Middle Schools and the consolidation of their
20 grades K through 5 into Spencer Elementary and their
21 grades 6 through 8 into Spencer Middle School and the
22 consolidation of pre-K students from all schools into the
23 space now occupied by the Office of Student Support
24 Services at Roane County High School will be the subject

1 of a Board of Education meeting scheduled for November the
2 6, 2025 at 6 p.m. At that time, the Board will conduct
3 all deliberations in open session and a vote will be taken
4 in open session following the Board's deliberation.

5 Ms. Stellato, do you wish to make your summary on the
6 proposed closure?

7 MS. STELLATO: Yes, thank you.

8 Good evening, members of the Board, staff, parents,
9 students, members of the Roane County community, thank you
10 for joining us tonight for this important public hearing
11 regarding the proposed closure and consolidation of Walton
12 Elementary/Middle School and Geary Elementary/Middle
13 School and its consolidation of their grades K through 5
14 into Spencer Elementary, their grades 6 through 8 into
15 Spencer Middle School, and the consolidation of all pre-K
16 students from all schools in the space now occupied by the
17 Office of Students Supported or located at Roane County
18 High School.

19 As required by West Virginia Code § 18-5-13(a), §
20 18-5-13, West Virginia Board of Education Policy 6200 and
21 6204, this hearing and the construction of the required
22 impact statement provides an opportunity to present the
23 rationale for these proposed changes, to share the data
24 and planning and form the proposal, and most importantly,

1 to listen to the concerns, ideas, and perspectives of the
2 community members.

3 On a personal and professional level, none of the
4 members that sit before you tonight wish to be here and
5 engaged in this process and having to make these
6 decisions. However, we have been charged to lead the
7 district through this most difficult time and therefore
8 must undertake this work and we understand the magnitude
9 of the decisions that will be made in the next two weeks
10 and do not take that responsibility lightly.

11 The purpose of tonight's hearing is not to finalize
12 any decision, but to ensure that all stakeholders
13 understand and engage with why this consolidation is being
14 considered, how it would affect students, families, and
15 staff, and what opportunities and challenges this proposal
16 presents for the future of Roane County Schools. Over the
17 past several years, Roane County Schools has faced a
18 combination of challenges that are increasingly common in
19 rural districts across West Virginia. Declining student
20 enrollment and community population, rising operational
21 maintenance costs, difficulty attracting and retaining
22 certified staff across multiple campuses, the need to
23 provide equitable services to academic programs,
24 extracurricular activities, and student supports across

1 all of our student communities, and a declining and now
2 negative fund balance that is needed to effectively
3 operate our school system.

4 Additionally, the state of West Virginia declared a
5 state of emergency in Roane County schools in July of
6 2025, citing failure to approve a closure and
7 consolidation plan, budgeting deficiencies, building
8 utilization well below average, and a \$2.5 million deficit
9 that has now been reduced to \$1.5 million, but expected
10 decline between \$500,000 to \$1 million during this school
11 year as a result of personnel overages from last year's
12 personnel season and the required addition of special
13 education staff that have been added this year to serve
14 students. Despite all of these hurdles, our goal is to
15 ensure that every child in Roane County, regardless of
16 where they live, has access to a safe, effective, and
17 academically strong learning environment.

18 The proposal under consideration would, as we have
19 said, close Walton and Geary Elementary/Middle Schools at
20 the conclusion of the 2025-26 school year and consolidate
21 both of those school populations into the existing Spencer
22 Elementary, Spencer Middle, and a section of Roane County
23 High School. Ensure that the transportation route,
24 staffing, and support services are planned carefully to

1 try to minimize the disruption and preserve community
2 connections. Additionally, it is hoped that this will
3 reduce the fiscal deficit by approximately \$1.4 million
4 annually.

5 The proposal is guided by the following priorities;
6 educational quality, improvement to the educational
7 quality for all students by offering a broader curriculum,
8 specialized teachers, and enhanced extracurricular
9 opportunities. Equity, so that all students, regardless
10 of home community, deserve access to comparable resources
11 and facilities. Fiscal responsibility, consolidation
12 would reduce duplicated costs and administration,
13 utilities, and facility maintenance, freeing funds for
14 classroom instruction and student supports, and long-term
15 sustainability. The consolidation facility positions
16 Roane County Schools for a stable enrollment, improved
17 efficiency for decades to come.

18 By now, I hope that each of you have had the
19 opportunity to thoroughly review the impact statement and
20 supporting data that the leadership that sets before you
21 prepared. The document was arranged with specific
22 sections addressing enrollment, facilities, finance,
23 personnel, student transportation, educational programs,
24 and the community. And tonight, we ask you or invite you

1 to ask questions about the construction of the plan and
2 the future impacts of its implementation. We recognize
3 that schools are not only an educational institution, but
4 the anchors of the community in terms of identity and
5 pride. We approach this process with respect,
6 transparency, and a commitment to open dialogue. The
7 voices of Walton and Geary family, staff, and community
8 members are essential to shaping the final decision that
9 the Roane County School Board will have to make.

10 Following tonight's hearing, all public comments will
11 be recorded and considered by the Roane County Board of
12 Education. The Board will review the data, public input,
13 and recommendations before making a final decision at the
14 November 6th board meeting. Should the closure and
15 consolidation move forward, a transition plan will be
16 developed by the team that sets before you and work with
17 staff, parents, and community representatives to make sure
18 that our children's best interests are maintained the
19 whole time.

20 Change, especially when it involves schools that have
21 served generations, is never easy, but as stewards of our
22 children's education, we must plan not only for today, but
23 for the next 20 to 30 years. Our mission remains clear to
24 provide every student in Roane County with the best

1 possible education in a safe, supportive, and
2 forward-looking environment.

3 Thank you for your time. Thank you for coming, and
4 for your continued commitment to the children of Roane
5 County.

6 MS. OTA: Public participation and attendants
7 are welcomed and encouraged here. Speakers are asked to
8 express themselves in a civil manner with due respect for
9 the dignity and privacy of others who may be affected by
10 your comments. While it is not our intent to stifle
11 public comments, speakers should be aware that if your
12 statements violate the rights of others under the law of
13 defamation or invasion of privacy, you may be held legally
14 responsible. If you are unsure of the legal ramifications
15 of what you're about to say, we urge you to consult first
16 with our legal advisor.

17 As Mr. Mace has already stated, we have 19 people who
18 have signed up to speak today. Therefore, each speaker
19 will have five minutes to speak. When your time is
20 running down, I will make this sound (indicating) to let
21 you know that you have one minute left to speak.

22 Okay, our first speaker on the list is Joe Weiland,
23 whose subject is, Don't close schools." Speaking after
24 him, will be Tiffany Raines.

1 Mr. Weiland?

2 MR. WEILAND: You know, it's a good thing when a
3 person can go in, so here we are. You know, you all might
4 need to think about what you all are doing to these little
5 kids. You all need to ride that bus for a week. Be the
6 first one on each hour-long bus and be the last one off,
7 and tell me how you like it. I don't know how y'all
8 calculate this on this time, but two weeks ago, I drove
9 the route from down there at the high school of Trace
10 Fork, Spice Ridge. It's a touch over an hour without
11 stopping. I don't know where you got your numbers from.
12 That's not stopping. If you figure each bus drop a stop
13 with two kids, two minutes, that's another hour.

14 My neighbor, my old neighborhood boy, they wanted to
15 come out here with me, but they don't get off the bus
16 until after 15 after 4:00. And, you know, and I counted
17 it takes 30 minutes to get to Geary. I believe somebody,
18 if you track, you'll see it takes an hour and 15 minutes
19 and add 30 minutes to it, that's an hour and 55 minutes
20 each way for these kids to be on the bus. We're talking
21 about first graders. And you're going to mix with
22 highschoolers. What's going to happens when they start
23 picking on them? What about your special ed kids? You
24 know, some of them are non verbal and verbal. What's

1 going to happen when you mix them?

2 I believe we put the buildings before we did the kids
3 here. I believe that's all happening. I believe a
4 million dollars is overkill. Can we not look at something
5 that's a five-year fix for long term. They don't have to
6 be bailed out in one year, I don't think. We can go in
7 debt over a year. We actually need to know how we're
8 spending our money. And I hope I got Geary and Walton,
9 together on this, both schools need to stay open. Not
10 one, both. Both are really important. I don't have any
11 kids in school, I don't have any grandkids in school.
12 Probably never will have. But these neighborhood kids,
13 and your all's kids are important to me. They do not need
14 to close this school down.

15 With that, I think you. And I really hope you think
16 about what you're doing and who you're going to hurt, a
17 first grader.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. OTA: You thank. And following Tiffany
20 Raines will be Wendy Looney.

21 MS. RAINES: Before I speak, did you say that we
22 can't give you anything during this?

23 MR. MACE: That's correct, yes.

24 MS. RAINES: Okay. All right. I'm sorry.

1 Okay, I'm Tiffany Raines. I am the LSIC chair for
2 Walton Elementary/Middle School. As a kid who had moved a
3 lot, Walton has always held a special place in my heart as
4 one of the few places that I could actually get to go back
5 to from my childhood. And when I decided to become a
6 teacher, it was the teachers that I had here at Walton
7 that really made an impact on me. And even though Diane
8 Carpenter wasn't my teacher until Roane County High
9 School, we know she's truly from home. As a teacher, it
10 also gave me an opportunity to show students the same kind
11 of love and community I remember. As a mother, it has
12 helped shape the lives of my own children. So it's hard
13 to stand here knowing all of that hangs in the balance.

14 This has been an emotional time for everyone involved
15 throughout every corner of Roane County. Throughout this
16 process, I have often felt that our fate is sealed and
17 that we will inevitably be closed. Despite all that, I
18 can't give up on something that is worth fighting for.

19 As you know, our LSIC has been trying to find ways to
20 use the policy waiver request process to save our schools.
21 We appreciate Ms. Stellato and the leadership team's
22 assistance in answering our questions along the way.
23 Ultimately, on October 24th, the LSIC voted to propose
24 that Walton Elementary/Middle School be allowed to operate

1 as a partial use facility that continues to provide a
2 high-quality educational environment while lowering
3 operational costs through targeted space utilization,
4 shared services, and community partnerships. We have
5 presented the proposal to affected staff who voted in
6 favor of the proposal on October 25th. I would have liked
7 to formally submit a request for your review today, so at
8 the end of this, you can tell me when the appropriate time
9 would be to give you that request.

10 According to a recent article in Washington Monthly,
11 closing schools rarely saves money and also negatively
12 affects students and communities. As students spend more
13 time commuting, they have less time for extracurricular
14 activities and families. Additionally, absenteeism and
15 behavioral problems tend to rise. Studies indicate
16 short-term declines in achievement test scores. And in
17 the long run, school closures can harm college completion,
18 job prospects, and earnings. Studies have shown that
19 small schools that focus on community partnerships,
20 promote instructional quality and community vitality. We
21 believe that our community will invest in partnerships
22 with our school that will allow us to decrease our cost to
23 the county. Savings and profits from a partial use
24 facility that utilizes community partnerships can be used

1 towards the operations and maintenance of Walton
2 Elementary/Middle School. We hope that you will find our
3 proposal a viable option and forward our request to the
4 West Virginia Board of Education. Perhaps they will
5 acknowledge the immense impact closure would have on our
6 community and consider this an acceptable alternative.
7 Should our school be closed despite our efforts, at least
8 we can know that we tried. I also know that our children
9 are resilient and will find success no matter where they
10 attend. I know that they will be loved there too, and I
11 will support their school and fight for it when that time
12 comes as well.

13 Please review our policy request and consider the
14 potential to keep our school in our community. I also
15 want to thank Ms. Moore and Mr. Barton for taking time to
16 come and listen to our hearing today.

17 If you could just tell me when I'm supposed to
18 actually give this to you, I'd appreciate it. Or Ms.
19 Stellato, I don't think they can answer me. Do you know
20 when I'm supposed to -- can I just drop it by the board
21 office tomorrow?

22 MS. STELLATO: Yes, or I can take it at the end.

23 MS. RAINES: Okay. All right, thanks.

24 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next will be Wendy Looney.

1 After Wendy will be Cindy Berry.

2 MS. LOONEY: First of all, I'd like to express
3 my extreme disappointment I have in Roane County Schools.
4 You have lost my trust and respect along with probably
5 several other Roane County voters. I fully believe there
6 has been a breach of this impact statement. The statement
7 contains misleading and inaccurate data, especially with
8 the numbers not adding up. It's also misleading because
9 the supporting data was made so small, it was impossible
10 for most to see, me being one included.

11 Consolidation excessively harms rural communities,
12 contrary to promises made to address concerns about
13 student transportation and overall impact. School boards
14 are not spending enough time considering the impacts of
15 closing that will have on the communities and the
16 students. I've spoken with Mayor Williams and several
17 senators, and they're not for the closing these school
18 either, especially considering part of the reason we got
19 to this point. You all know the negative effects. To the
20 students, lower test scores, lower attendance, poor
21 behavior, overcrowding. You all know the negative effects
22 on communities. I don't know much about Geary, but for
23 Walton, those are centers of communication. They're part
24 of our community. We have athletic participation, PTO

1 meetings, 4-H clubs, and they serve as polling places to
2 vote. Walton Elementary also hosts many after-hour events
3 to everyone, like Grandparent's Day, Veteran's Day
4 celebration, bingo for books, Christmas programs, and
5 common jobs.

6 Some of the money saved because of consolidation
7 results from having jobs. Small-town schools are often
8 one of the largest employers in the town, not to mention
9 the businesses that depend on the school employees and
10 parents to stop in and support the local businesses.
11 Walton Mercantile and Hardware and Mountain Market, are
12 the only two places in Walton where you can stop and get
13 breakfast lunch or dinner. This is really convenient when
14 you've worked all day and have to make it to teacher
15 conferences, board meetings, or athletic events, or just
16 when you're feeling lazy and don't feel like cooking. One
17 time our hot water tank busted and flooded our entire two
18 floors. Rather than driving 30 minutes to Spencer or 40
19 minutes to Charleston, our small town store had everything
20 we needed to make the repair. Mountain Market is the only
21 gas station over there. Without it, we'd be driving 30 to
22 40 minutes.

23 As someone else said, you realize that consulting
24 schools doesn't save you as much money, if any money at

1 all. If consolidation happens, Roane County will lose
2 many students, families, and taxpayers. Those families
3 will no longer be paying taxes in Roane. Our hard-earned
4 money will no longer be spent in Roane. We will go
5 elsewhere for everything we need. I've been looking at
6 places in Charleston to move, but if I choose to stay in
7 Roane and this happens, I'll never spend another cent in
8 this county.

9 A superintendent in Massachusetts summed it up, as
10 educators, we're often asked -- as educators are often
11 asked, we're going to do more with fewer resources, which
12 we'll do, but it's just challenging. But today, the
13 burden is on our elected officials. Now is not the time
14 for small or simple solutions. Even though times are
15 challenging, consolidation does not have to happen. Where
16 there's a will, there's a way. In a week's time, I had a
17 petition going online and in person, 466 was collected in
18 one week's time. Just imagine how much more support we
19 could get not to close these two schools.

20 I respectfully pray that the board members consider
21 all the information that has been provided and make the
22 best decision for the students and communities. And I
23 pray that they do not close Walton Elementary/Middle
24 School and consolidate Spencer Elementary and Spencer

1 Middle. Vote no on Walton area closing and consolidation.

2 Do I ask my questions now or at the end?

3 MS. STELLATO: Now.

4 MS. LOONEY: I ask them now?

5 MS. STELLATO: Yes, ma'am.

6 MS. LOONEY: This doesn't count there, correct?

7 MS. OTA: You still need form.

8 MS. STELLATO: We're going to write them down.

9 MS. LOONEY: Huh?

10 MS. STELLATO: We're going to write them down.

11 MS. LOONEY: Okay. The numbers are not matching

12 up. I have specific examples I can get you. If

13 consolidated, will Spencer Elementary and Spencer Middle

14 School will be renamed to Roane County Elementary and

15 Roane County Middle? If so, how much will this cost to

16 change the colors to and letterhead? Why can't Spencer

17 Elementary be closed, sending K through 6 and K through 5

18 to Spencer Middle, and 7 through 12 to Roane County High

19 School? Walton High School did it for years. I know this

20 because I went to Roane my sophomore year. I hated it. I

21 got out of there as soon as I could, got enough credits to

22 graduate. And if you close these schools and other

23 businesses close as well, no one will want to buy the

24 school, where Spencer Elementary, it makes a profit. And

1 if you looked at different school district consolidation
2 --

3 MS. OTA: Next is Cindy Berry. Following Cindy
4 will be Gemini Carpenter.

5 MS. BERRY: Thank you for allowing me to speak.
6 My name is Cindy Berry. Allow me to share how I'm
7 invested in our Roane County school system. My husband
8 and I have a 34-year-old daughter who years ago attended
9 Walton Elementary School and Roane County High School. We
10 have an 18-year-old granddaughter who is at Marshall
11 University pursuing A meteorology degree, and she also
12 attended Walton Elementary School and graduated from Roane
13 County High School in May. We have three grandchildren
14 who are here at Walton Elementary School. We have two
15 daughters, yes, two daughters, who are here at Walton
16 Elementary. In addition -- hold on, guys. In addition,
17 we have three grandchildren here at Walton. We have two
18 daughters, yes, two daughters. In addition, we have three
19 daughters at Roane County High School, and we have a
20 two-year-old daughter that I pray attends Walton
21 Elementary. All of those children I have mentioned, are
22 what we consider the past and the present of our great
23 school system here at Roane County.

24 This consolidation is not just closing of two schools

1 per se. There will be so many effects for years to come.
2 Just to name a few that come to mind are job losses,
3 negative psychological effects for our children, and all
4 of your children. Lower student achievement, attendance,
5 test scores, behaviors, long-term outcomes such as college
6 completion, as Mrs. Raines mentioned, longer bus rides,
7 and decrease in property values. These are just a few
8 that come to mind, and here we are. Here we are. How did
9 we get here? How did we get here? Some say it's due to
10 low enrollment and small class sizes, blah, blah, blah.
11 We've heard it all. It's the same song and dance. At the
12 end of the day, as I have taught my two adult daughters
13 and our three teens, if we aren't responsible in
14 budgeting, you will lose that house. You'll lose that
15 vehicle, and your utilities will be cut off. We all know
16 that as responsible adults. We all know that. And I'm
17 going to ask again, how did we get here? How did we get
18 here? Why is Roane County schools in the negative? It's
19 time we hold those accountable, no different than if I
20 don't pay my bills, I will receive those notices and I
21 will have those negative consequences.

22 Please do not sacrifice our teachers. Do not
23 sacrifice our children. Do not sacrifice our schools, due
24 to the negligence of those who couldn't budget

1 effectively.

2 Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak.
3 Sincerely board members, with all respect, with all
4 respect, a mom, a nana, a friend, a neighbor and an
5 adopted mother of six who chose to bring those six
6 children right here in Roane County, where I believe we
7 have the best school system in the state of West Virginia.

8 Thank you for your time.

9 MS. OTA: Thank you. The next speaker is Gemini
10 Carpenter. And following her is Chad Perkins.

11 MS. CARPENTER: Good evening. My name is Gemini
12 Carpenter. Most everybody here knows me. My husband and
13 I, as well as our children, have all grown up and
14 graduated from the Roane County School System. But
15 fortunately for my husband and I, we got the privilege of
16 graduating from Walton High School right up here on the
17 hill.

18 Now, my life started out a little bit different than
19 many people, other people's did. I started my education
20 at Ruby Elementary, and I was a child of divorce. I was
21 raised by an outstanding single mom, and I was watched
22 over by an amazing mammal, and watched by many aunts and
23 uncles. My mom eventually remarried, and I had the dad of
24 my dreams. And you see, my father couldn't be bothered

1 with me. He had a new life elsewhere, and he had to get
2 to it. He didn't have time for me and his new life, so I
3 was pushed to the side. But anyway, after Ruby
4 Elementary, I went to Geary for half a year. Then after
5 that year, I came here to Walton. And I planted here in
6 the fall of 1985, and I was there until I proudly
7 graduated from high school in 1993. And then the county
8 decided to shut her down because we were going to get a
9 better education at Roane County High School.

10 Now, the reason why I told you that I'm a child of
11 divorce is because this whole situation reminds me of a
12 divorce. There's money, alimony, maybe, child support,
13 almost definitely. And who's going to get custody of the
14 kids? Is it going to be 50-50? Is it going to be at
15 Spencer? Is it going to be a Geary? Is it going to be a
16 Walton? Who's it going to be? And then they're all going
17 to end up at Roane County High School. But here's the
18 problem; there's always the good parent and the bad
19 parent. You know, the good parent, they care about the
20 kids. Here's the good parents (indicating). All of you.
21 They know what they're going home to. Are they going home
22 to food? Are they going home to someone that's there?
23 Are they going home to heat, running water? Are they
24 going home to anything? The teachers, their staff

1 members, citizens, the good parents, you know. Then you
2 got the bad parent, the superintendent. You're the bad
3 parent. You don't care. Your family, your true family,
4 like my father, was somewhere else. You're not invested
5 here. You're in Jackson County. So you don't have to see
6 those little faces at the bank, the gas station, the
7 grocery store. I volunteered here a lot. These little
8 faces, they still see me at Walmart. "Hey, Ms. Gemini.
9 Hey, how are you?" They still want to hug me. But you
10 don't care. So the bottom line is, you just -- you want
11 to close. So in the course terms, you want to make sure
12 that you can pay as little child support as you can
13 possibly get by with. And by no means should they contact
14 you about adding substitutes, getting PATCH programs
15 approved or anything else. You don't want to be
16 inconvenienced because it's just a job to you. Well, here
17 in Roane County, it's a family. This whole county is a
18 family. Even though I've seen comments that try to pit
19 the schools against each other, it's not true. This is
20 not just a Walton/Geary problem, this is a Roane County
21 problem.

22 If this consolidation happens, the only people paying
23 for it in the worst of ways, just like in a divorce, are
24 the children, the children of Roane County. And the only

1 people we have to blame are the ones who want to make it
2 the easy way out and pay for the least amount of child
3 support. And that's you, the one that doesn't care, the
4 bad parents.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. OTA: Next is Chad Perkins. Following him
7 will be Justin Shears.

8 MR. PERKINS: All right, good afternoon. I just
9 have a few questions. I'll start with those and then I'll
10 read my statement.

11 My questions revolve around the authorship of the
12 impact statement. I'm curious, how many authors
13 contributed to the impact statement? Are all those folks
14 still employees, current employees of Roane County
15 Schools? I'm curious if outside legal counsel was
16 consulted in the writing of the plan? And I would
17 appreciate an estimate of how much you would guess the
18 plan is just simply copy and pasted from another county's
19 plan. I'd also like to know, was there any outside expert
20 that's not legal, so not legal counsel, but any technical
21 technical counsel, transportation experts, operations-type
22 people, consulted in the writing of the plan? And then
23 lastly, my last question is, did any county or state board
24 members contribute or advise the plan prior to its being

1 published to the public? Those are all the questions I
2 have for you tonight.

3 My remaining remarks are based on the district's own
4 closure application, which as you know, proposes a
5 permanent closure of Geary Elementary/Middle and Walton
6 Elementary/Middle. I'm doing my best to just work at the
7 impact statement or the document I may refer to it as and
8 go from there.

9 First, the transportation data show that the harm to
10 young students is not minimal. Minimal is used a bunch of
11 times in the document. That claim is made, in fact,
12 dozens of elementary school routes to Spencer Elementary
13 are listed almost to an hour, which is well above the
14 45-minute West Virginia guideline for K-5 students. The
15 plan itself concedes that nearly every affected group will
16 require a waiver under 4336, and it would be my submission
17 to you, the Board, that if the plan needs submit waivers
18 to function, the plan may be the problem. And if the
19 impact were truly minimal, you wouldn't need broad 4336
20 waivers in order to implement the plan.

21 Second, the consolidation creates a serious capacity
22 imbalance after closure. Spencer Elementary School, by
23 the document, is projected to run at almost 95 percent
24 utilization, which is essentially full. That means no

1 buffer for class size limits. Special education pullouts,
2 which has become something I've become a lot more
3 interested in, or even future growth, which is a word we
4 can never talk about here. When a single bus breakdown or
5 quarantine can shut down a grade level, operating a
6 building near a hundred, doesn't appear to be efficiency.
7 It borders on fragility.

8 Third, the educational benefits are asserted, but not
9 substantiated in my opinion. The plan repeats the same
10 kind of aspirational phrases, stronger opportunities,
11 innovative learning, but provides no staffing charts, no
12 course additions, no budgeted programs, and without those
13 line items or hiring commitments, these are promises
14 without fruit. Families aren't asking for slogans. They
15 need concrete schedules and ratios, who, what, when,
16 where, and funded how.

17 Fourth, the financial rationale depends almost
18 entirely on staff reductions. Totally get it, that's, you
19 know, a large percentage of your budget, but those are not
20 really true costs operational savings. Transportation
21 costs are going to rise, utilities continue for the empty
22 buildings that we're standing in potentially, and
23 transition costs, moving, security signings, and I think
24 what at least the communities would ask is a rebranding of

1 the consolidated schools. The only listed renovation for
2 the countywide system is just the toilet, which is going
3 to be talked about over and over and over again, so I'm
4 going to let that go. But we don't even know that there's
5 nothing there for that.

6 Further, financial estimates continue to vary wildly.
7 And so what I would submit to you, that if I went to my
8 Board, fortunately I don't have a Board right now, but if
9 I went to the Board that I used to report to at my old job
10 and varied my financial estimates by over a million
11 dollars from one meeting to the next, I would not attend
12 the next meeting. We cannot accept that. It's
13 unacceptable. And you cannot make decisions when you
14 don't really understand why those financial estimates
15 vary.

16 Finally, I would say the true impact to the community
17 is grossly understated. I would ask that you please
18 acknowledge the community loss explicitly. We are super
19 concerned about what happens to this community in Walton
20 and what happens to the other part of southern Roane
21 County with the closure of Geary School and the Walton
22 School. This plan chooses the most disruptive option
23 without presenting any side-by-side alternatives. In
24 summary, this proposal strings our youngest and poorest

1 among us for the longest rides, crowds one elementary
2 school to the capacity, and relies on an optimistic math
3 and offers no verifiable educational gain. The Board's
4 duty is to ensure an equitable, thorough, and efficient
5 system, not simply the fewest proofs to maintain.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. OTA: Next is Justin Shears, then following
8 him will be Madison Sergeant.

9 MR. SHEARS: Before I start, I structured my
10 statement mostly in the form of questions. Do you want me
11 to ask one question at a time?

12 MR. MACE: We started your time.

13 MS. STELLATO: We can reset it.

14 MR. SHEARS: So, state law has set forth the
15 maximum bus transit times for a reason. My question is,
16 do you believe that this transportation plan really meets
17 the intent of these laws, or is it based in skirting these
18 laws to meet this agenda? Another question I have is,
19 what safety evaluations or surveys have been completed to
20 evaluate the plan to basically have mass bus stops? Along
21 with that, a lot of these bus stops kind of bleed over
22 into private property. Has the legal process been
23 followed to establish an expense of right-of-way from bus
24 stops that will affect private property owners? Areas

1 that we've often used is a bus turnaround, like a church
2 parking lot or things like that, a bus turnaround is a lot
3 different than people congregating there for 15 to 30
4 minutes, which also goes into a lot of liability
5 questions. Where are people supposed to park at these
6 stops? As I was looking at the transportation plan, many
7 of these stops do not support parking for people to bring
8 their kids there and wait for the bus, let alone a bus to
9 pull over safely and board those kids. What is Roane
10 County School's plan for students that don't have
11 transportation to a bus stop? To clarify, I ask for that
12 response not to include something that puts the onus on
13 the community. We pay our taxes, we pay this school
14 system to provide our kids transportation and those less
15 fortunate kids specifically that might not have a way to
16 get to one of these bus stops. What is Roane County
17 Schools' plan for those less fortunate kids? What added
18 liabilities do you see for the district in using these
19 mass bus stops? Does Roane County Schools take
20 responsibility for what happens at these stops? We've
21 heard all year about congestion issues at Spencer
22 Elementary School. How is this going to be made better by
23 adding more students and buses? And is this being taken
24 into account for transit time and how much this congestion

1 will affect how long these students sit on a bus waiting
2 to enter the school or exit the school? Why are there no
3 evaluations for negative impacts included in this impact
4 statement? I would call it a supporting statement. Only
5 supporting verbiage minus a lackluster community impact
6 section. Which I also asked, who prepared the community
7 impact statements, new principles that have been at the
8 community for less than two months? And I asked the
9 superintendent, were these preparers restricted in content
10 or the length, and were they counseled by you in any way
11 on how these sections should be worded? I'd also like to
12 know if the superintendent can give a ballpark estimate of
13 how much state and federal funding is lost per student
14 when a student leaves this district? Which I'll talk
15 about more in the next hearing when I talk about some of
16 these budget estimations.

17 So I really feel like this transportation plan alone
18 doesn't support this plan alone, doesn't support this
19 plan. Kids deserve equal ability to access education.
20 And when they don't have a lot in school, I think that
21 doesn't support equitable access to education. If you
22 look at the median household income of this county, it's
23 not very high. And you're asking a lot. If you think
24 about, one of the biggest things that was talked about at

1 the beginning of this was, how much unity it's going to
2 bring. Kids will start sports together and end sports
3 together. No, when I went to school, when we went from
4 middle school to high school, probably 75 percent of the
5 kids that I played middle school sports with, no longer
6 played once they got to Roane County High School because
7 they didn't have the ability to do that. When your home
8 game is a 50-mile round trip for a family and then add on
9 the away games, the amount of money they have to be able
10 to provide their kids to be able to eat every day when
11 they have to stay after school because they can't go home.
12 They have to stay there. They have to go eat fast food.
13 You know, \$10 a pop every day. I ask you to think about
14 that.

15 MS. OTA: Next is Madison Sergent. After that
16 will be Shelia Chapman.

17 MR. SERGENT: Good evening, everyone. So my
18 question is, in this life or the next, you can only serve
19 one master. We have two masters sitting in front of us
20 right now. One are the children. Two is the budget or
21 money.

22 In all of poetry, my favorite phrase comes from
23 Chaucer, who in the Relic Seller's Tale wrote in Latin,
24 "Radix mulorum est cupiditas," or the root of all evil is

1 money. Why do I bring this up? I have come back to West
2 Virginia with my three girls, hoping that they could
3 possibly come to school in this building, the same
4 building that I went to school in. The state that I just
5 came from, Arizona, is the leading forefront nationally of
6 implementing school choice plans. My community is a
7 military base. It's pretty small in terms of geographic
8 area. So a bus to get from your housing on post to your
9 school on post, takes maybe five minutes. Very, very
10 short. Most of the students just ride a bike or they walk
11 to the school it's so close. But despite that, because of
12 the competition to the public school system from the
13 alternate options, I would estimate that probably about 40
14 percent of my coworkers are homeschooled. That is in a
15 best-case scenario where transportation time to and from
16 the school, probably takes no more than 15 minutes, even
17 if you're as far away as possible. Now, imagine if you're
18 on a bus for in excess of an hour. How many students are
19 we going to estimate that we're going to lose? And not to
20 other counties, because of course some people are just
21 going to drive to Kanawha County or Clay County or Jackson
22 County or what have you. How many children are we going
23 to lose to these school choice programs, which is going to
24 create an escalating moral hazard the more that this goes

1 on. As we lose more and more people, we lose more and
2 more funding, which has knock-on effects, externalities,
3 that the current impact statement does not account for.
4 And I'm not going to tear too much into the impact
5 statement because I'm sure everyone else is going to
6 nitpick it as the night goes on.

7 But needless to say, at the end of the day, we're not
8 here to serve a budget master, hopefully. We're here to
9 serve the children. And if we continue to choose dollars
10 and cents over the children, we're going to have these
11 spiraling negative effects to the point where the county
12 is going to slowly bleed itself to death in terms of the
13 amount of students within the system and the revenue
14 generated from that. So, what I want you all to think
15 about going through this is, which of these two masters do
16 you want to serve? Do you want to serve the children or
17 do you want to serve the budget?

18 Thank you for your time.

19 MS. OTA: Thank you. Up next, we have Sheila
20 Chapman, and following Sheila will be Shelli Ellis.

21 MS. CHAPMAN: Well, as you know, I'm Sheila
22 Chapman, and I want to say that I came to this very school
23 for my childhood education, and I went to Walton High
24 School, and I graduated there in 1975, and it was a

1 wonderful life for a child whose mother died at 10 years
2 old. I had a family I felt. I had people who saw me,
3 teachers who knew who I was. I'm afraid, so afraid, for
4 these little ones today that they will lose, the teachers
5 will lose, who these children are when it's new teachers
6 that don't know the families that don't know the children
7 that don't understand how far these babies will have to
8 come to go to school. It's not fair. It is not right.
9 It is not family. And we expect adults to look out for us
10 when we're children. We should be able to, but we can't,
11 because we have people that want new schools and want to
12 spend more money than what they have. If my house had a
13 leaky roof and the porch didn't look good, I can't go out
14 and buy another house because my bank account won't
15 support it. I have to fix the house I have. I can't
16 starve somebody else because I want. And I'm afraid that
17 these kids are getting starved out in Geary and Walton.
18 It's not fair. It is not. I can say a lot of things
19 about the impact statement. I've gone over it until my
20 head hurts. Fell asleep looking at it last night. It
21 makes no sense. It sounds like a fairy story in some
22 parts. Things do not work that easy. Real life does not
23 work that easy. You want to talk about the children going
24 to having a medical facility really close. Well, their

1 medical facility on this side of the county usually is in
2 Charleston. Their pediatricians are in Charleston. Their
3 specialists are in Charleston. Their parents work in
4 Charleston. I don't understand how you expect their
5 parents to get over there at that school in a medical
6 emergency or any other kind of emergency that their child
7 might need them for. They can't get there very quickly at
8 all.

9 And I would like to know how you propose to get those
10 children home in inclement weather? If there's a
11 snowstorm, if it's a flood, and we know very well that it
12 floods between Walton and Spencer always. If there's a
13 flood, it always floods there. So how do you propose to
14 do that? If you wait just a half hour, some of those kids
15 aren't going to get home in snow or flow.

16 Once again, on the impact statement, the numbers
17 don't make sense. I don't know where they came from. I
18 don't know you hired a professionals that was independent
19 and came in and did this. Someone that's not affiliated
20 with the school system should have done the numbers. For
21 me, they should have done it. And I do appreciate
22 everybody else's that came before me. They've covered
23 things a lot better than I can. But I just want you all
24 to know that this community matters to everybody.

1 I didn't see any figures on property values. I
2 looked and looked for those, I did not see any kind of
3 numbers on those. And as far as I can tell, our property
4 values will drop 24 percent once the consolidation is
5 complete. So, who fixes that for us? Nobody. So we're
6 still expected to pay the same taxes and you're going to
7 want us to pass more school levies. Why would we pass
8 levies when you didn't take care of the money the last
9 time? We trusted you and that trust was misplaced. I'm
10 sorry to say it, but it is.

11 And yes, I am angry. I know they say, don't say
12 anything in anger. Don't speak of anything in anger, but
13 I think as a community, we're all angry. Because you hurt
14 children. That's what the problem is. They are the main
15 thing here. The children are blessed to us and we love
16 them dearly. Our property is one thing, but the children
17 are first. And I wish they didn't have been put first.
18 Sorry for you. I thought I knew a couple of you, but I
19 think I don't.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next is Shelli Ellis, and
22 following her, we will have Steve Ellis.

23 MS. ELLIS: Hello, my name is Shelli Ellis. I
24 had the privilege and blessing to go here all the way up

1 until the tenth grade.

2 This school is the heart of our community. It is a
3 safe haven for all that enter. It's a warm meal and love
4 for some that can go without at home. And they will go
5 without again when consolidation occurs. It is a building
6 full of care, correction, and encouragement from dedicated
7 employees and teachers. Here, you are somebody, not just
8 a number.

9 I have studied the impact statement until I came to
10 look at it again. And at first I laughed. I thought it
11 was a joke. Then I cried. Let me give you a real impact
12 statement. I was a victim of consolidation. I was a
13 sophomore when Roane County High School came in. I
14 started my tenth grade year there. I lost half my
15 classmates immediately. There was 44 of us. I graduated
16 with 14 of them. We were family. We had been together
17 for 10 or 11 years. They were gone. They went to other
18 schools, they went to homeschooling, they quit. They're
19 not getting on the bus like I did at 5:55 in the morning
20 like I did. I played basketball, seventh, eighth, ninth,
21 tenth grades. It was often. I probably could have had a
22 scholarship. I probably could have gotten through college
23 on that instead of still paying student loans today. But
24 guess what? Transportation was not permitted for me to

1 get there. I could have played good. But I couldn't play
2 any kind of activities. I couldn't do anything. I live
3 out here. Besides, there was no way to get back and forth
4 at that time.

5 I was lost in a crowd. No longer a somebody. The
6 teachers of Walton High School and here were the very
7 best. We were a boss. No one knew my name. No one cared
8 to know. This is trauma. This is what we're going to do
9 to little kids. I was 16, so I can't imagine what it's
10 going to be like for seven, eight, and nine-year-olds. I
11 can't imagine. That was also the year that I developed
12 anxiety. Was it the trauma induced from the school
13 change? Was it all the strangers? Was it giving up
14 everything I loved in basketball? Was it the lack of
15 sleep from getting on the bus at 5:55 to 6:05 a.m. every
16 morning? Because I wasn't the first one on the bus, so
17 what time was everybody else getting on there? It was
18 legal. You know why? Because it looked good on paper.
19 We bus changed so they could start that timer all over
20 again. We rerouted buses. We cut people off buses, they
21 quit school. Is that right? Looked good on paper, but
22 it's not right. This is the real impact of consolidation
23 you're looking at.

24 I finished school, but that was the roughest two

1 years of my life. Still yet today, that was the roughest
2 two years of my life. I'm not kidding you. I read this
3 impact statement several times, and I realize why it
4 angers me so. It has no emotion to it, no feeling. It is
5 very redundant and very inaccurate. This is more than a
6 school to this community, this is our life. This will be
7 a major upset to find schools to attend for my grandkids
8 to have to transfer counties. I mean, you know, that's,
9 nobody's going to ship their kids to Spencer every day.
10 That's not going to happen. Are we prepared to lose all
11 these residents in Roane County? Are we prepared to lose
12 all these young teachers? Because when they get cut,
13 they're not coming back. Are we prepared to cut so many
14 children out of fair education? They deserve that. What
15 is exactly is this worth? Are we dollar insensitive to
16 debt? What is it worth? There's other ways to do this.
17 You know, I look at the numbers. Roane County High School
18 has enough room for everybody in Spencer.

19 Save our schools.

20 MS. OTA: Next is Steve Ellis. Following him
21 will be Linda Ashley.

22 MR. ELLIS: Hello. So, I'm Steve Ellis. I am,
23 like my wife, and I am a former member of this school at
24 Walton High School up until tenth grade. And, you know, I

1 don't have really fancy speech. I don't have much
2 questions. But also being somebody who works for the
3 Roane County Board of Education as a custodian, I can tell
4 you one thing, this school and Geary's school, it's not
5 just the schools, they're family. The first day I went to
6 Geary and worked, I didn't know anything. They welcomed
7 me in just like I was -- had worked there for years. When
8 I came here and worked, I knew a lot of the teachers,
9 still friends with a lot of the teachers. It's not just a
10 school, it's not just two schools you're shutting, you're
11 taking stability away from a bunch of little kids.

12 You know, my little granddaughter is in first grade
13 here. She loves the school, closer teachers. That's why
14 I get so emotional when I talk about her. Because, you
15 know, I don't know if any of y'all have kids here or not,
16 but it doesn't matter. This school and Geary School both,
17 the kids are comfortable. They know they're taken care
18 of. Parents know the kids are taken care of. I know
19 something happens to her, my granddaughter she gets sick,
20 I know one of us are going to get a call saying, you know,
21 she's sick. We know she's going to be taken care of until
22 we get there. And, you know, Spencer, it's a 35-minute
23 drive from my house to Spencer. I know, I drive it four
24 or five days a week. So you add a school bus to that,

1 that's going to be considerably longer. You put a bunch
2 of six, seven, eight, nine, five, six, seven,
3 eight-year-old kids on a bus, the time they're on a bus
4 that long, they're not going to be able to study, they're
5 not going to be able to concentrate on what they're doing,
6 they're going to be tired and wore out. Trust me, I haul
7 a seven-year-old and a two-year-old around regularly.
8 When they're in a vehicle for that long, they're tired.
9 How's that going to affect their grades? You know, when
10 they already get to school -- I mean, that's all I've got
11 to say.

12 I was really hoping you considered that it's not just
13 schools that you all want to shut down. You're taking
14 away safety and security for these kids.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. OTA: Next, we have Linda Ashley, and
17 following her will be Lisa Messineo.

18 MS. ASHLEY: I didn't come so you could listen
19 to me. I came so I could listen to you. I have
20 questions, and those are the responses for which I want.

21 My first question is, do we all agree that the Roane
22 County Board of Education that you have a duty of cater to
23 the southern Roane County? Do we agree on that?

24 Do we agree that taxpayers have rights? And with

1 that being said, I would be interested in knowing, for the
2 taxpayers of the 25286 zip code, what is the percent of
3 our tax dollars that are allocated to Walton
4 Elementary/Middle Schools?

5 I understand that there were a few options of how to
6 right the ship of mismanagement. What are the other
7 options that we don't know and haven't made available to
8 us rather than closing Walton and Geary? I understand
9 that you probably fully vetted those. I would love to see
10 that information as well.

11 What are the factual points causing Walton and Geary
12 schools to be viewed as expendable?

13 And because the school system utilizes taxpayer
14 dollars, what are your ethical standards for supporting
15 all Roane County communities and the services provided in
16 those communities, such as general stores and post
17 offices? I can tell you, as the bank president of the
18 bank in Walton, West Virginia, hopefully for the next 100
19 years since it has been for 117.

20 And I guess my last question is for you, Ms.
21 Stellato. As assistant superintendent last year, what was
22 your knowledge, your first point of knowledge regarding
23 the mismanagement of funds?

24 Thank you.

1 MS. OTA: Next we have Lisa Messineo, and
2 following her please, Ashley Glaspell.

3 MS. MESSINEO: I think I can see over this.
4 Excuse me. Yes, my name is Lisa Messineo. I did teach in
5 Walton School for a while. I taught most all the schools
6 at secondary or at some point in my career, so I was
7 familiar with them. I'm passionate about all of them.

8 Why do you think you couldn't pass a levy? Was it
9 just that people were being stingy and didn't want to
10 give, or they didn't have to give? No, it was because you
11 are not being trusted. And do you feel that we can trust
12 you to make the good decisions. You were supposed to make
13 the good decisions. We all have to live within our means.
14 You were supposed to live within your needs. You were
15 supposed to live within your means. But instead, you
16 built a new middle school for 299 students. And they
17 spent how much, please? And this is a question I would
18 like answered right now. How much on furniture you want?
19 Is there an answer?

20 MS. OTA: They won't answer. They're not
21 allowed to answer.

22 MS. MESSINEO: Okay, sorry. Anyway, we built a
23 new school for 299 students and put new furniture in it.
24 To me, that says you just planned all along to

1 consolidate. I think there has been stressed that there
2 has not been any alternative plans proposed. And an
3 impact statement is supposed to do exactly that. I know
4 exactly what it should do. It should really delve into
5 the impact of the school closure on everything. And this
6 impact statement failed to do that.

7 Again, you know, we have (clapping) (inaudible), but
8 we can't afford to keep our schools open. You can have
9 Spencer Middle School fit inside the current Roane County
10 High School. Those students fit in there. Why do we need
11 a new middle school? But there it is.

12 Okay, so we got to deal with what is now, right? To
13 me, Christina Wilden or Wildin, I'm not sure how you
14 pronounce her name, she was a graduate from here. And she
15 wrote an article for the paper. I think you all should
16 make yourselves very familiar with it. She is now a
17 professor of education and social policy, University of
18 Michigan. And she referenced research studies that show
19 that closing oral schools leads to community economic
20 declines fraying social ties and calling property values.
21 It also showed that in West Virginia, consolidations did
22 not save money, but had many negative impacts for children
23 and communities.

24 I think tonight the transportation questions and

1 issues have been well addressed. And I'm not going to
2 hammer them any further. But you have to just look at how
3 many waivers have to be requested for bus rides. That's
4 unacceptable for young children. Like Christina said, the
5 year she had to ride the bus from Granny's trailer to the
6 high school, were the hardest years of her life. The
7 hardest. And we're going to impose this on little
8 children? That is unconscionable.

9 If you consolidate, your numbers are going to dwindle
10 even more than projected. No one is going to want to move
11 to an area, Geary or Walton, if there are no local
12 schools. No one is going to move in the future here.
13 Look, Mayor Williams and I have not always agreed on a lot
14 of things, but I have to hand it to him for managing to
15 keep our town of Spencer afloat. If it wasn't for him,
16 we'd be a ghost town. Well, that is exactly what you are
17 relegating Walton and Geary to become, a ghost town. And
18 if the impacts are way further than anything you're even
19 beginning to look at or address. Williams kept it going
20 by saying, "I have a vision. This is possible." I want
21 you all to have a vision and say, "This is possible."

22 Thank you.

23 MR. MACE: We're going to go into recess. Take
24 10 minutes here.

1 (WHEREUPON, a recess was taken,
2 after which the following
3 proceedings were had.)

4 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our next speaker is
5 Ashley Glaspell and following her will be Gabe Boggs.

6 MS. GLASPELL: I wanted to start off by saying
7 thank you to the parents, teachers, community members and
8 students that have come today. They're the reason why we
9 continue to fight to do the right thing for our children,
10 our families and our communities.

11 I have a few questions that I'd like to have
12 answered. What's being done to address -- if this
13 consolidation does go through, what's being done to
14 address the parent pickup situation at the current Spencer
15 Elementary School? I know I read where you guys were
16 going to try to bus the kids into town and have the
17 parents meet you there. I don't think that is a viable or
18 cost-effective solution.

19 What have we done about homework expectations? With
20 longer commutes, the kids are going to have less time to
21 study. They still have to eat and sleep and be kids. My
22 last request would be, I understand we can't address the
23 board directly, but I would like to request a public forum
24 be held in which we can have a direct question and answer

1 session with the current board members. I think it would
2 go a long way in restoring trust in the community with
3 them. And that's all I have to say.

4 MS. OTA: Thank you. Now we have Gabe Boggs
5 followed by Rachel Hays.

6 MR. BOGGS: I want to start out by just saying
7 that it's kind of hard to say, honestly. It's
8 interesting, but whatever the outcome is here, I'm at
9 peace with it. That's because God is with me. He has
10 guided me while I've prepared for tonight's hearing, so
11 I'm compelled to share that.

12 Ms. Dahl (phonetic), you stated that. It's brought
13 you here to help us through this situation, so I can
14 relate. As I venture to walk with Jesus, I too am here as
15 part of God's plan, and I have no doubts about that.

16 Some of this is a little foggy, but I started school
17 here in 1989, not this part of the building, the old part
18 of the building. I remember in 1993 when we closed the
19 schools and Roane County High School started. As a matter
20 of fact, our class/my class moved up to the old school,
21 like in '95 or '94 or something. I did 5th through 8th
22 grade. Mr. Carpenter, you were my principal.

23 January of '99, in my 8th grade year, we moved down
24 here in the middle of the school year. I graduated from

1 this building. It meant nothing to me. It was a new
2 building. My past was up there. I played on some of
3 these teams that these banners are here to show you. I
4 just wanted to point that out that we are from here.

5 My point is that the generation that you're talking
6 to right now about consolidation and minimizing impact
7 statements, we're sitting right here. We've done it.

8 I'll keep my questions minimal as your impact
9 statement has shared the effects on our children minimal.
10 So, take that as you will. Why are there no
11 considerations to mitigate future mismanagement of the
12 funds explicitly listed in the impact statement? Are we
13 just going to assume that we're going to continue to
14 mismanage our funds? What was the thought process behind
15 the times of these hearings? I asked it last week at a
16 board meeting. Is it to purposely stifle public comment
17 to prevent people from getting here on time. I'm not
18 sure. I'm asking. Hopefully, I will get an answer this
19 time.

20 My next question, how many man hours were spent
21 preparing this document? Truthfully, what's the potential
22 course of action available to mitigate overcrowding after
23 consolidation? Not one mention of that in there and has
24 never been mentioned here before.

1 How is there not a financial protection for the same
2 period of time included in the impact statement? We can
3 forecast costs. Other entities of government do it every
4 day.

5 How are rifts going to be determined? Is it by
6 countywide seniority? I didn't see the specifics. What's
7 your best guess for the additional rifts that you spoke
8 about at the last meeting for the next year? Why is there
9 no statement concerning local economy? We're talking
10 about \$1.3 million in salaries is what we're saving. It's
11 listed in the statement. But with only a third of the
12 county working and median household income at 25K a year,
13 I feel like that is probably impactful with the county.

14 This one is pretty cool. How many times was a
15 document reviewed for accuracy and data validation? Even
16 an old-fashioned spell check? Because it's pretty much an
17 embarrassment that the document has a typographical error
18 on the cover page. I'll point out that this sets the tone
19 for the entire document to be unbelievable and gives every
20 reader doubt that there's even a QA or QC process that
21 gets performed at your level.

22 Let's get into the real questions. In the cohort --
23 that's cool, I'll finish these next time. But the cohort
24 survival method that's used to project enrollment, I know

1 you'll defer these to Mr. Garner, so I'll look at him.

2 What other methods of extrapolation were used to
3 compare those results and was it determined that the
4 cohort survival method was the most accurate or is it
5 mandated by the state? It doesn't mention that.

6 What are the survivability rates that we use? You
7 listed enrollment decline rates, but they are not
8 survivability rates. I'm having trouble following the
9 calculations. How was each school enrollments decline in
10 the last four years calculated? Was that used with the
11 same cohort survival extraction? And please elaborate on
12 the average retention rate of freshmen over the last four
13 years of Roane County High School. The document states
14 that it's 11 percent. Preschool enrollment projections
15 were using birth rates for the last three years. We'll
16 talk more. Thank you.

17 MS. OTA: Next is Rachel Hays and following her
18 will be Sierra Thaxton.

19 MS. HAYS: I first want to start this evening
20 by just pointing out something that I observed as I sit
21 here and listen to people come up and speak to all of you.
22 This space, these people, this is not just a school and
23 it's not just a community. This is absolutely one hundred
24 percent a family. I could not ask for anything more than

1 an environment like this for my children to be raised in.
2 We support each other through thick and thin. We show up
3 even when it's not convenient. It's not an atmosphere or
4 an environment that you will find everywhere, but you
5 certainly find it here. So, to have it tossed to the side
6 over really any excuse at all, it just will never be good
7 enough.

8 Since the vote was made to proceed with the impact
9 statement and closure and consolidation proceedings, I've
10 heard it said several times that we can't change what's
11 been done and we have no other options that will save us
12 this amount of money, and if we don't do this, the state
13 will come in and will take us all over.

14 We've been heavily encouraged to embrace these things
15 and move forward because it's so important for our
16 children that we be positive, that we focus on the
17 positive aspects of this closure and consolidation and
18 that positivity will get us through, if the negative
19 attitudes are what's making this so hard.

20 I adamantly reject that notion. As some who support
21 this consolidation would have you believe, we're not a
22 group of negative people with nothing better to do. We're
23 very much caring members of the community and justifiably
24 angry and disappointed parents whose children will feel

1 the impact of this in real time. Parents who are
2 desperately trying to get you to see and understand the
3 tangible effect this will have on our children and our
4 communities.

5 Let me be clear. There is absolutely nothing
6 positive about this. No matter how you choose to spin it
7 or the perspective you choose to take, ultimately every
8 student in this county will suffer because of this. I
9 continue to adamantly maintain that this impact statement
10 is nothing more than a well-crafted document whose largest
11 purpose is to support your plan for closure and
12 consolidation. Anybody can write a document like this.

13
14 With all the resources we have now electronically,
15 there's not hardly anything in here that's worth its
16 weight to print it on. It's not a true outline of the
17 impact to our communities, as it's been purported to be.
18 There are numerous ambiguous, subjective and open-ended
19 statements in this document and right here to quote one:
20 "In addition, students will continue to cultivate a strong
21 foundation in preparation for higher education after high
22 school with enhanced opportunities for visual and
23 performing arts, supported by access to an auditorium."

24 Is there an auditorium at Spencer Elementary School

1 I'm not aware of? I know there's a stage, but I'm not
2 aware of an auditorium and I would really like to know
3 what enhanced opportunities our children are going to
4 receive. Anybody can say enhanced opportunities. I don't
5 need more lip service. I need concrete evidence.

6 Another question I have is that I would really like
7 to -- and I've said this question before and I'm going to
8 say it again, because I think it's important. I would
9 like to know the exact methods used to calculate the bus
10 times. The math is not mapping. The people that live
11 along these routes have serious issues and concerns with
12 the information for the bus routes that have been laid out
13 in this document.

14 I also have to point out the irony that we have an
15 administrative representative from every school here on
16 this panel except for the one we're currently in and
17 fighting for. This is really starting to feel like we're
18 in the twilight zone. It seems like not only are you
19 working toward the closure of our schools, you're
20 systematically working to undermine our existing
21 structures to better serve your justification for closure
22 and consolidation.

23 How many more things will you take from our children
24 before you're satisfied? Teachers, principals, multiple

1 of them at this point, Patch 21st Century, and now you
2 want to take our schools. When is it going to be enough?
3 We've been scared into thinking that the last thing we
4 want is the state board of education to come in and make
5 these choices for us. At this point, I'm not sure how
6 that could be any worse than what we've got going on right
7 now. Thank you.

8 MS. OTA: Next, we have Sierra Thaxton and
9 following her will be Nona Perkins.

10 MS. THAXTON: Hi guys. My name is Sierra. I'm
11 a proud Raider alumni, along with a proud Tiger. I loved
12 it here so much that I convinced my Hoover Husky husband
13 to move back to Roane County so we could send our kids
14 here.

15 I didn't have this in my speech, but I was thinking
16 about it sitting there. So, my first day of kindergarten,
17 my teacher took my picture with my backpack at the front
18 door and after my high school graduation, she actually
19 found me, brought me that picture and gave me the biggest
20 hug ever. That's just something that you're not going to
21 get in a sea of hundreds of kids.

22 But anyway, I feel like we, as the Walton community,
23 have been handed low blow after low blow. The first
24 failure that we were delivered this year was the promise

1 of multiple options presented to the board. One was voted
2 on and we're still to this day focusing on only one
3 option. The others were feasible. They just don't save
4 the most money. Other options can save hundreds of
5 thousands of dollars, but that's not the budget we're
6 trying to reach.

7 Another failure that has been presented to us is the
8 60-minute bus ride. The state recommendation is 45, but
9 the waiver allows 60 minutes. Again, our kids are going
10 to suffer. Where are we even getting these numbers from?
11 I have a scenario for you. Little Johnny, he lives out at
12 Cicerone, 4th grade, perfect attendance. He doesn't just
13 like, he just loves school.

14 He catches the bus at home. In order to reach the
15 60-minute bus ride, we have to cut little Johnny's road.
16 Johnny's mom works in Charleston and takes the only car to
17 work at 4:00 a.m. How is Johnny going to get to school?
18 Is he supposed to walk to the bus? Because one doesn't
19 live on the main road, do they not deserve a bus ride in
20 Roane County? I believe every child in Roane County is
21 going to take a hit, but those underprivileged kids are
22 going to suffer even more.

23 Honestly, I'd hate to be on the board this year.
24 You're going to either have to stand up for what's right

1 or what you feel like is right or you're going to have a
2 crappy choice following you for the rest of your term. I
3 wanted to remind the board that while the superintendent
4 and people pushing numbers are pushing this agenda, at the
5 end of the day, like the Wizard of Oz, they are behind a
6 curtain.

7 You're the one voting. You're the one that's going
8 to get the backlash when things go bad next year. Thank
9 you.

10 MS. OTA: Thank you. First, we have Nona
11 Perkins and following we have Makynlee Patton.

12 MS. PERKINS: Hi. I'm Nona Perkins. I am a
13 former Walton student, a former Walton teacher and I have
14 attended school here. I've been a faithful parent
15 volunteer since I quit working here in 2020. My husband
16 and I facilitate a lot of things for this school and our
17 community through his business and we're happy and lucky
18 enough that we can do that and we would love to continue
19 that.

20 I have several questions for you this evening based
21 on parts of the impact statement. The first one
22 references Page 5 under Facilities 3-2B. It says, "only
23 modern renovations, including a \$700.00 preschool toilet,
24 are needed."

1 It's insane to think that we're going to move
2 students all over this county and that's the only money
3 we're going to spend. There's no mention -- which this
4 has been brought up before, but I think it needs mentioned
5 again -- there's no mention of rebranding costs for SMS or
6 SES to reflect that those schools are going to be all
7 county schools.

8 At minimum, the entrances, the signs of the entrances
9 and the signs on the schools should be changed to reflect
10 that. Because how would you feel as a child rolling up to
11 this school on the first day and they said, this is for
12 everyone. We're all going to be one. Raiders are one.
13 But it still says Spencer Middle School. I want you to
14 put yourself in their shoes.

15 So, my specific question relating to that is, will
16 there be rebranding for the '26-'27 school year, and if
17 so, those costs should be reflected in the impact
18 statement? If there are not plans to rebrand, then those
19 considerations need to be made, and that needs to be voted
20 on, that there will be -- or it needs to come before the
21 board.

22 My second point is on Page 43 in the 4th paragraph
23 under Spencer Middle School. It says, "Students will also
24 benefit from a full range of extracurricular activities,

1 including athletics and arts, supported by greater
2 participation numbers and resources."

3 There are several mentions in the document of there
4 being more extracurricular opportunities, which means
5 after school, right? But have you considered how the
6 students who live in rural areas of this county will get
7 there? I'm not just talking about Walton and Gary, but
8 I'm even talking about the kids who go to Spencer that
9 live all the way out in Reedy or past there. My question
10 here is, will there be an activity bus for the
11 consolidated schools for the school year '26-'27 for those
12 kids to attend these supposed enhanced extracurricular
13 activities?

14 My third question is from Page 45 in the first
15 paragraph. It says, "This consolidation will provide
16 opportunities for increased effective teacher
17 collaboration and consistency of curriculum through common
18 planning."

19 Now, I've done some research on this and to the best
20 of my knowledge, Spencer Elementary School still currently
21 has three classrooms per grade level and they have a
22 traditional three specials, art, music, and PE. If
23 consolidation moves forward, the numbers I couldn't
24 exactly find here, but let's just say one class per grade

1 is added to allow for the Walton and Gary students to go
2 in that building, but we still only have three specials?
3 So, this is yet another falsity of the impact statement.

4 If teachers are to have grade level common planning,
5 there is going to have to be a fourth special. And as
6 further on that, if all those teachers in the buildings
7 are going to get their 45-minute planning, I would think
8 we'd have to add another special or something, somewhere
9 for those kids to go in order for those plannings to
10 happen. And I think that should be reflected in the
11 budget as well and it is not.

12 My fourth question is about this school. Last year at
13 the end of the year, our teachers vacated the older end of
14 the building because we were told that, hey, something
15 could be done with that end of the building. It could be
16 a daycare or it could be rented out for businesses or, you
17 know, there's all these options that were presented to us.
18 So, our poor teachers moved their whole entire classrooms,
19 and I don't know if you know how that would be, but you
20 can imagine, to somewhere else, and nothing has been done.
21 So my question is, why was that idea of renting out that
22 space or using it for a preschool not done? Thank you.

23 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our last member will be
24 Makynlee Patton.

1 MS. PATTON: My name is Makynlee Patton and I
2 attended Walton Elementary Middle School. I'm currently
3 in 8th grade, but I have a six-year-old and nine-year-old
4 sister. Not only would this closure affect so many
5 people, but it would also put my sisters in overcrowded
6 classes, it would affect my sister with learning
7 disabilities, and multiple students will also be put in
8 different counties, more than the 50 plus that have
9 already left our school. This isn't only going to affect
10 the Walton and Gary students, but it's also going to
11 affect the Spencer Middle and elementary kids, because
12 there are going to be in overcrowded classrooms.

13 There are many great teachers that are going to lose
14 their jobs due to this. Why weren't we, the students,
15 thought of more during the over-schooling process? Right
16 now, there is a dark cloud over us in this county, but us
17 students at Walton are making this the best year knowing
18 that our years at Walton might be coming to an end. Thank
19 you.

20 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: That concludes the public
21 participation portion.

22 MS. STELLATO: So, first and foremost, thank
23 you. It's not easy to be here, but we heard you. We took
24 lots of notes and we're going to do our best to try to

1 address the questions.

2 Just to kind of give you a little bit of insight,
3 principals at the end of the table were tasked with
4 continuing to try to capture the questions as they were
5 coming up, as well as we have tried to do our best here as
6 well. So, we may be going back and forth to just prepare
7 notes and things.

8 One of the things that I want to start by saying is I
9 think I addressed this with a particular member a while
10 back and that the impact statement, when they send it to
11 you, right, it's a template, and yes, we can decide what
12 goes in there, but much -- how do I put this? I hear what
13 you're saying that it doesn't address the impact to your
14 families and your hearts and your children.

15 We are required to create this document that looks at
16 various aspects of the pieces of moving all these parts
17 and I acknowledge that. It does not get at the heart as
18 well as it could and/or should, and that will be feedback
19 that we've already started to relay that perhaps we need
20 to look at the title and the wording and what is required
21 in there. Many of the things that you brought up, use tax
22 base and tax percentage right at the top, that's not part
23 of it as well.

24 So, again, we will do our part to relay this.

1 Unfortunately, there will be people that come after us
2 that have to go through this process and it could be us
3 again, if this goes any other way.

4 So, I'm going to start -- I'm trying to look through
5 here real fast and see some of the ones that I know I can
6 take right off the top. In terms of the man hours, I put
7 -- I'm going to jump around, so if you hear me get one,
8 mark it off, okay?

9 In terms of the man hours that was put into this, we
10 didn't keep track. We did not keep track at all. There's
11 no way I can tell you. Just like we're flipping through
12 right now, this is what we've been doing, and if there are
13 mistakes on it, then we didn't catch it. That's the
14 truth. We felt like we did the best that we could. It
15 was a team effort.

16 I'm going to let some of the principals and directors
17 speak specific to the things that they were charged with
18 and responsible for. In terms of direction we definitely
19 looked at, and we used previous examples, like to get an
20 idea of, like, what did Kanawha County put forward in
21 terms of structure, right? We wanted to look at the
22 structure and the ways that the questions were answered.

23 Outside of that, we divided up the tasks, worked
24 together to group read with each other. Basically, the

1 community impact section and the educational program
2 section were primarily constructed by the principals; the
3 transportation facilities, primarily by Mr. Garner;
4 clients, Mrs. Hartman, personnel would be Mrs. Tanner, and
5 then the rest we just kind of put together as we worked as
6 a team constructing this.

7 So, I hope that gives you some insight into that. To
8 answer a question that I can remember right now, there was
9 no outside consultant and we did not pay an attorney to do
10 the document for us. That was not something that we felt
11 like we needed to incur additional expenses with, as you
12 mentioned, the \$700 bathroom renovation. We tried to keep
13 the expenses to a minimum. I will also say that we
14 addressed concerns about rebranding early on. That is the
15 intention of the staff. We've talked a lot about what that
16 would be, but we were advised the state department to
17 leave out the costs and the assumptions, right? We didn't
18 want to assume anything as part of that. And so should
19 the vote be a yes moving forward, then that would be one
20 of the things that we would do next, that we would start
21 talking about rebranding and the costs associated with
22 that and what that process and procedure might look like.

23 I'm going to go back to the beginning and kind of
24 work in order here. We did look at several different

1 options. Again, the state requires us to put together a
2 document such as this, if you're looking at closure and
3 consolidation. That doesn't mean that we didn't look at
4 other options or we didn't look at what would be the
5 impact if we canceled all the arts classes. That was one
6 of the things that we looked at and I would say would come
7 in a strong second to the disclosure consolidation
8 document. We just don't have a hearing on closing the
9 arts. That's not saying that we can't. That's not part
10 of the required process in accordance with the policies
11 and the laws that are set out in front of us. On the
12 question of how did we get here, that is something that I
13 wish I had an answer for. You've heard me talk before and
14 you have heard me say that I wish we had three more years
15 to get here. We were asked about accountability and
16 choices that were made prior to. We do not have those
17 remedies available to us. That is not something that the
18 state board allows for and so, therefore, we have to keep
19 moving forward with this.

20 I believe a lady asked about when I personally, as
21 the assistant superintendent, became aware of financial
22 issues, and my first indication was last year when we were
23 looking at funding summer school.

24 I feel like I've had this conversation with several

1 of you, but I'll say it here for everyone. When we
2 realized that ESSER funds had been expended and we still
3 had summer school expenses, we did everything in our power
4 to try to back up from offering summer school right then
5 and there and ultimately made the choice to move forward
6 with summer school. But that was my very first indication
7 and that would have probably been March of last school
8 year.

9 MR. GARNER: While Ms. Stellato looks for other
10 things she needs to address, I will address the
11 transportation facilities and the enrollment numbers that
12 some of you had some questions about.

13 Starting with the bus routes, I'm in transportation.
14 This is 16 years complete. I'm starting my 17th year in
15 transportation. We started out with 43 routes. We're
16 down to 28. I had to cut 15 routes over time. I never
17 stopped running a road completely during the previous 16
18 years. In my 17th year, I'm handcuffed by the state,
19 because they don't want nobody on a bus over an hour. It
20 is 30 minutes for elementary. You have a 15 minute
21 allotment, so it goes to 45. And yes, you've got the
22 right waivers if you want to get close to 60.

23 So, I agree with all of you. I'm just handcuffed.
24 And what the state is probably looking at, they don't want

1 kids on the bus over an hour, especially the little ones.
2 So, the only way I can make that happen and try to keep
3 the 28 buses I'm using now and not try to put a bore in
4 the hole, is to stop running buses as far as I have in the
5 past.

6 Somebody mentioned Granny Creek this evening. Well,
7 Granny Creek would go all the way up to like where Gloria
8 Road is. There's a church up there that we turn around
9 and come back down. I'm not going to be able to do that.
10 I can only go up to Spice Ridge and turn that bus around
11 and then it will start picking students up on Route 36 as
12 it's coming into town.

13 Right now, that bus goes up Granny Creek, then it
14 goes over to Hollywood, goes up Trace, and picks up kids
15 on Hollywood and Trace and picks back out before it goes
16 into Gary School. I'm not going to have that bus. I'm not
17 going to be able to run a bus on Hollywood at all, or
18 Trace, and there's other buses in the Gary area and the
19 same thing in the Walton area.

20 There are certain areas I just simply can't run a
21 bus. I have Bus 18 to the Walton area. One of the cuts I
22 had to do last year, I had to cut five buses last year to
23 try to help save money to hopefully balance the budget
24 that I wanted.

1 Well, in the Walton area, Bus 18 starts up at top at
2 Plilo (phonetic). Jim is back with the fireworks. Ever
3 heard of that? Seen the sign? I've seen the sign on 119.
4 It goes up there, turns around and starts coming down
5 Plilo. Then, I send it up Cottontree after it's 119, do
6 the Cottontree, goes up, takes a deep leg over to Johnson
7 Creek. Before we start going down Johnson Creek, we take
8 that bus and go up Tully Ridge and get two kids up there.
9 Then we go all the way down Johnson Creek and then back
10 in.

11 Frankie was there. I was like, Frankie, you're still
12 here. Frankie's up there. He's my driver that does it.
13 There is no way in the world we are going to be able to do
14 that next year in one hour. So, I'm going to have to not
15 be able to run all of Johnson Creek or all of Cottontree.
16 I can get the majority of Clio coming down, straight shot.
17 I'm not going to go up Louis Station like he does now, but
18 we will start to come down where Louis Station and Clio
19 meet, come straight down, and Frankie's going to be coming
20 straight into town. I'm going to take the bus that goes
21 up Gad, come down and go up Cottontree. I was hoping to
22 at least get up to Virgin. But when I had Eric Chaney
23 check it out for me and he says I'm about five minutes
24 short. It's going to take me about 65 minutes. I said,

1 "Okay. So, I'll look for another place maybe I can turn
2 that bus around," and that's the church at Cottontree
3 That's the only place I could turn that bus around and get
4 it back to 119 to take it to town.

5 So, I've got to figure out something else to do for
6 Johnson Creek, at least to get that bus on their part of
7 it. So, Boyd Harper that comes out of Long Ridge in this
8 area, he's going to go up to Johnson Creek just to Rocky
9 Ranch and turn the bus around before he needs to come into
10 town, if they vote to do this.

11 By any means, this is not my solution. This is what
12 I'm handcuffed to do. But we don't want kids on the bus
13 over an hour, I get it. Parents have to get to work.

14 When I was principal here, I think people would drop
15 off their kids at 7:00 o'clock so they can be in
16 Charleston by 8:00. I get all that. It is very important
17 that families get an income. They can better themselves
18 all the time. I get that. But please understand that
19 we're doing what the state said. I have to ask for a
20 waiver. I didn't have to ask for the waiver before right
21 now.

22 My previous 16 years, I did not have to ask for any
23 waivers because we were not consolidated. I can talk
24 about other routes. I know a lot of people from Walton

1 here. I think the rest of the Walton bus routes, we can
2 run almost as is now. I don't like the idea of massive
3 bus stops like it was mentioned before, but the bus stops
4 are out of my hands and is the parent's responsibility at
5 the bus stop.

6 We have a policy from preschool through third grade
7 that if the parents stop there or whoever they designate
8 to be the person at the bus stop, my drivers are not
9 allowed to drop off, okay? Fourth grade and above, they
10 can't. Third grade and under, and this is state policy,
11 there has to be somebody who's talking. It can be an
12 older sibling. Some parents do that or try to. Whatever
13 the parent wishes are, we will do as far as dropping those
14 students off. If not, if this consolidates, they'll have
15 to bring them all the way into Spencer.

16 I immediately try to get a parent on the phone as
17 soon as one of my guys radio in saying so-and-so's not
18 there and try to make the other arrangements. But
19 unfortunately, they might have to bring them all the way
20 back into town. That would be really bad. But we're not
21 going to leave a little kid out there wondering where the
22 parents are. We do that now and we're going to continue
23 to do so. It's going to be worse now because we can't
24 drive past that house.

1 And I understand, a car can break down and all that
2 stuff. It happens now and it will happen then. And we're
3 asking over -- it's over 100 kids right now that I'm going
4 past their house that I won't be able to do next year. It
5 may not seem like a lot out of 1,500 kids, but it is a
6 lot. It's like seven percent of our population. Even one
7 percent is too much if we have to force it on the parents
8 to bring them out. I get all that. I understand
9 completely where you're coming from.

10 As far as the \$700.00 cost for the preschool toilet,
11 Roane County High School, when it was built, had a child
12 care center in it. We're trying to bring that back right
13 now. We have a Head Start class up there that has
14 three-year-olds that was in a daycare center.
15 Unfortunately, Gary did not have enough kids to have a
16 preschool program at Gary.

17 There was questions about the preschool playground
18 down at Gary. We brought it in town so those kids could
19 have something for the three-year-old program. This goes
20 into the enrollment numbers. Gary only had seven kids
21 signed up for preschool and the people here at this table
22 tried to get more people to sign up for preschool out of
23 Gary. Fortunately, since they had seven, it was decided
24 if the parents wanted to, out of Gary area, could bring

1 those students into town.

2 That teacher came into town to teach preschool.
3 Preschool only has seven kids at Gary. In first
4 grade/kindergarten, we see a little bit of a bump. Not
5 every year old goes to preschool. Some parents think
6 they're not ready for them to start school. They would
7 like to teach them at the house. But when they start
8 kindergarten, they will bring them back. We see a little
9 bit of bump.

10 So, if you look at the Gary numbers online, I know
11 most of you have looked at some part of it, it goes from
12 seven up to nine. Then, the co-part that Mr. (inaudible)
13 talked about is the diagonal going down. So, in
14 kindergarten, if there's nine kids going to preschool
15 seven to nine, but then we see year after year, we keep
16 losing kids and each school has a different factor. Every
17 school loses at a different rate than what Walton loses
18 and what Spencer Elementary does. All of the schools in
19 the county, we never keep the same number of kids. And
20 the total birth rate that's in the numbers here in the
21 chart keeps dropping for the whole county.

22 Since I left Walton, in the 16 years going on 17 that
23 I've been in transportation, this county has lost 1,000
24 kids. That's part of the reason why I can't have 43 buses

1 like I did when I took over from Woody Wilson.

2 Ms. Stellato mentioned this is just a template. We
3 had to fill in the boxes that the state set up. When she
4 talked about state of emergency and then Mr. Mace said
5 we're under a state of emergency.

6 So, one of the things to keep parking is your
7 buildings are not being utilized to their potential. They
8 want to see the numbers like 80 percent, 85 percent or
9 higher. Walton, Gary, those schools, 33, 34 percent
10 utilized.

11 As somebody spoke that as far as the parking, we
12 parked here. It was built in 1966. They had enough room
13 in the rest of the building to move everybody down.

14 Now, it would have been great if they could have
15 found something to help offset this. If somebody made
16 some levy to help offset this. But people at the state, I
17 was with her, we were talking to a state representative
18 down in Charleston at the department of ed, and they said
19 that means it's not going to say you're too far in debt.
20 It's hopeless.

21 That's why we were under the gun to come up with this
22 plan. We've looked at closing one school, we've looked at
23 closing both schools, we've looked at closing Spencer
24 Elementary. It never made a difference to ship everybody

1 out, but then I've got a conflict just on the
2 transportation side. I would have to start adding back
3 routes for drivers and that's the latter. We don't want
4 to see an increase in costs. It was mentioned to me,
5 let's just talk about the scenario of Spencer Elementary
6 and shipping them out to the other schools.

7 I'm going to start with somebody first. Do we deal
8 with the little kids first or do we deal with the older
9 kids? They said high school kids need to sleep in.

10 We used to have two runs to Walton and Gary two runs
11 of a morning, but I had none to do all that. The board
12 directed me to, okay, let's make high school kids be able
13 to sleep in a little bit later. Because we were picking
14 up high school kids at 5:45, okay? We went around and
15 around and around and 6:20 was the time that I tried to
16 start every bus and I do double runnings every morning.
17 We did double runnings in the afternoon at Gary for a few
18 years. First year we haven't done it.

19 So, if we go to pick up high school kids first, and
20 let's say I get them to Roane County High School at 7:00
21 o'clock. We pick them up at 6:00 and I get them into town
22 at 7:00, I've got to keep the buses back out to Gary, to
23 Walton, here in Spencer. I got to give them out to
24 Reedy, put them out towards the Jackson County line and

1 make that happen.

2 So, I would probably start the elementary run at 8:00
3 o'clock. That means I wouldn't be able to get them, and I
4 got to ship them all the way to Gary and Walton. So, I
5 would have that hour to get them there so they would be
6 getting in at school at 9:00 o'clock.

7 Students in elementary school are required to have
8 315 minutes of educational time. It's a little over five
9 hours. So, you have to throw in lunch and breakfast. So,
10 you're looking at least seven hours. Then, I've got to
11 take the high school kids home. We should got to take
12 them first, little kids or the older kids, or can we do it
13 at the same time? If I get the high school kids at 9:00,
14 they've got to be in the building probably at least seven
15 hours. We're at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. So, I'm
16 not going to pick up the elementary kids until 5:00.

17 What time do I take the high school kids home? I've
18 got to turn the buses back around. So, it's not designed
19 to go in two directions at once with 28 buses. We would
20 have to shuttle them. That's what you kids did, the ones
21 that I recognize your faces. You would either have had me
22 as your teacher, your principal, whatever, that's what
23 they used to do. They would come out like the bottom of
24 Cottontree or Johnson Creek, and we could send a high

1 school bus out, pick up those kids, take them into town,
2 and then your driver would go back up, they would bring
3 Cottontree or Johnson Creek out and go back up and get the
4 younger kids to bring them out. That is what we used to
5 do, but I had more buses back then.

6 So, we talked about the Cottontree and talked about
7 closing Spencer Elementary somewhat. There will be other
8 aspects of that, but I'm just talking about the
9 transportation aspect of that.

10 We talked about the waiver to Policy 4336. I'm
11 required to do that. Yes, it's about every single bus in
12 the county that's going to get a waiver, if we have to go
13 down those roads. I have asked without waiver if I go for
14 consolidation and it's over 30 minutes. Every class is
15 going to be over 30 minutes and we're looking at 45
16 minutes. Everyone is going to be over 45 minutes.

17 Again, I want to stress the utilization of Gary and
18 Walton is the reason we're going down these roads. That's
19 from the state level. He said that in the state of
20 emergency when they were talking to the board.

21 Activity bus. There are different scenarios on the
22 activity bus that could happen. We could bring it back
23 the way it was, but that would have to be a budget concern
24 for next year. It is not anywhere in a plan. But we do

1 have currently three postings for after-school bus runs
2 that will be leaving to three elementary schools at 5.30
3 to take students home.

4 Now, are we going to be able to go door-to-door for
5 only three buses? Probably not. It depends on the
6 turnout for the after-school program. But this is like
7 the activity bus we used to run. It would start to run at
8 the high school, came up to this school, this area, went
9 across Amma Road or hopped on the interstate to get over
10 and drop kids off on Amma Road going into Gary School and
11 then come back on Route 36 if there were kids that lived
12 on Route 36. Now, not every time did that bus run that
13 route that way. There was times those kids from the
14 Walton area and you can go straight out Route 36.

15 The after-school program I just talked about is going
16 to be four days a week and they should start here very
17 soon in November. They got grant money for that bus.
18 Depending on her turnout when she gets to the program, we
19 might very well be able to add people on that bus. It's
20 not in the SOAR program. I don't know if any practices
21 will be done at 5:30. Maybe volleyball, something like
22 that, football, they always seem like they want to
23 practice later and later. That was even hard at 6:30 to
24 get them on activity. Some volleyball, some basketball,

1 weightlifting, all of those types of students we were able
2 to take on to the activity run.

3 If Dan had practice after school, we could do the
4 activity run. We can do that using the SOAR buses as long
5 as there's capacity, and by capacity, I mean most of our
6 buses, we can fit about 50 students on there two to a
7 seat. We can jump over to 70 or so going three to a seat.
8 But if we're talking all age level kids, I'm looking at
9 50. So, I can take roughly 150 kids home if they had to
10 stay over for something on the grant money.

11 Now, we might want to run a fourth one. Somebody was
12 talking about going 43 on one of her questions. So, we
13 might have to send a bus up 14. In my mind, I'm thinking
14 we go down 119, we go out 36, we run 33. But she's right,
15 we may have to go -- a fourth bus at 14, and maybe that
16 bus could go through Middle Fork and out to the Jackson
17 County side of Middle Fork.

18 I'll try my best to make whatever scenario works.
19 I've done it for 16 years. I don't like my 17th year very
20 much at all. Thirty-nine overall.

21 Inclement weather, flooding, I try my best to monitor
22 the roads. I was principal here. There's a different
23 transportation person here when I was principal here, and
24 we had to spend until 7.30 before we could leave because

1 we got caught. Brenda Seabolt, you were here. Anybody
2 else here that had to spend a little extra time? Pam was
3 here. Robin was here. I called them at 10:00 o'clock, we
4 need to go. The transportation guy was not in his office.
5 The superintendent was at a vo-tech meeting. We were
6 stuck. By noon, we started having water coming over at
7 the post office and that's the trap here is the post
8 office.

9 Yeah, we've had water come in the sewer treatment
10 plant, but it's never been up in the building. Okay, this
11 is a flood zone. If you go to the 100-year flood map,
12 these old buildings are in the flood zone. It says in the
13 worst case scenario, it would be a 3D utility. It has been
14 in the sewage treatment plant at least three times that I
15 know it.

16 But flooding, I try to do my job and get our kids
17 home as quick as we can. I try to monitor it the best I
18 can. I have other people, other eyes, I've had plenty of
19 volunteers who tell me when the weather is bad. They'll
20 text me. They'll want to know. They'll text my wife. Is
21 he going to close the school? I don't know. He's out on
22 the road. That's what I'm doing at 3:00 o'clock in the
23 morning.

24 Are we going to get caught sometime? Yes. You've

1 already had an event a few years ago. I went out there to
2 personally oversee what we were doing. We get on the
3 phone, we talk, hey, is there another relative we can take
4 the kids home to? If you can't make it in, it may not be
5 safe.

6 Unfortunately, over the last 16 years, I know where
7 the flood areas are. Speed Road doesn't count. It floods
8 there all the time. But I've got problems when it floods
9 or the low water bridge up on Johnson Bridge starts
10 flooding. We've done that. Congestion is going to tell
11 me to do it right. And Ms. Stellato was in on this. We
12 are hauling kids at 3 o'clock to the parking lot.

13 The last time I talked to Vicki McLaughlin, my
14 driver, she started out with 22 kids. I think it's up to
15 34. It's easing the congestion in the afternoons. I wish
16 we had something better in the morning time. I have buses
17 at Dollar Tree. I have a high school bus, I have a middle
18 school bus and an elementary bus at Dollar Tree and
19 parents would use it. I can swing other buses into Dollar
20 Tree and need it to help the congestion for elementary. It
21 is an issue.

22 If you look at the plan, there are cutoff areas in
23 the plan. We had to sit there and say, is there a place
24 that it's easier for the parents to take them outside the

1 county? So I started looking, where's that cutoff?
2 There's a cutoff on Charleston Road that it's easier for a
3 parent to take their kids to Clendenin.

4 The same thing going out on Route 36, there's a spot
5 that it's easier to either go to Clendenin or take them to
6 Clay County.

7 You're talking about parking at the bus stop. Madam,
8 I put the road to go past the house. Again, Bus stops are
9 the parents' responsibility. I can't control what your
10 kids are doing at the bus stops. I wish we had big
11 parking lots that we could pull up for you guys, but it
12 just doesn't exist.

13 If I go up to the Cottontree church, you know, if we
14 turn there, there's some spots up at Rocky Branch on
15 Johnson Creek. There's not going to be a lot of room.
16 The cars would have to move all the way up into Rocky
17 Branch and wait for the bus to get up in there so it could
18 turn around and then the bus would leave and then you guys
19 would leave. But that's not an inconvenience to parents.

20 I know people need to get to work. If I start every
21 bus at 6:45 and get them in town right away at 7:45, that
22 is too late. Six forty-five and you've got to work in
23 Charleston or Parkersburg, I wish we had more businesses
24 in Roane County. I get it. You're going to have to use a

1 babysitter or building blocks or something. Again, that's
2 a cause for the parents. It's not ideal.

3 Ms. Stellato, do you need the mic?

4 MS. STELLATO: Yes. I'm just going to pass it
5 down to Lori. Can you speak to them about your thought
6 process?

7 MS. COTTRELL: So, the question was about
8 potentially having four or even in some cases five
9 teachers per grade level. The projection for next year,
10 Mrs. Tanner has communicated with me, there will be four
11 different integrated arts. We will have PE, wellness,
12 music and art. So, each teacher will have common planning
13 with their grade level. So, if there are four, then they
14 should be able to have common plannings. Right now, our
15 teachers have three integrated arts, and we do have one
16 teacher in kindergarten and one teacher in another grade,
17 and I believe it's second, that doesn't have a common
18 time, but we made PLC times at the beginning of the day
19 from 7:30 to 8:00, so they have collaborative time all
20 together.

21 The other question about the auditorium, since
22 elementary does not have an auditorium, we have a very
23 small stage. I'm not sure where that was referenced in
24 the book, but if it did say that, that's a mistake because

1 we do not have an auditorium.

2 The car rider bus, we still do have several parents
3 picking up. Mr. Garner has pretty much addressed that.
4 We have several kids that ride the car rider bus to the
5 parking plaza. They get out in front of the Dollar
6 General. We have more signing up every day. So, the more
7 people that take advantage of this, the less congestion we
8 have from day-to-day.

9 The pickup procedure lasts anywhere from 15 to 20
10 minutes from the time we started, which is 3:00 o'clock
11 until it's over, which most of the time it's around 3:15
12 or 3:20. Any other questions?

13 Spencer Elementary will have to have a rebranding, if
14 that's the way that we go. We don't have a gym floor that
15 has Spencer Elementary on it, so that will be a savings,
16 but we do have signs at the bottom of the hill and on the
17 outside. All of our classrooms, as far as overcrowding
18 go, we are at capacity in most of our classrooms right
19 now. So, we will need the additional teachers from Walton
20 and Gary. They will have classrooms.

21 We've done a site map to have four kindergartens for
22 next year and then five of every other grade level. Were
23 there any other questions for Spencer Elementary? Like I
24 said, there are four projected kindergartens and we have

1 those four kindergartens down what used to be the
2 preschool wing that will now be the kindergarten wing.
3 Then, first and second will be together in what is now the
4 kindergarten and first grade wing. Third grade will be
5 where the second grade is now, and third, then fourth and
6 fifth will be upstairs with five classrooms per grade
7 level, projected.

8 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Would you be willing to
9 channel homework for the expectation of schools to
10 progress short running process?

11 MS. COTTRELL: At Spencer Middle School, we
12 don't assign homework to our kids. If they have homework,
13 it's because they did not finish what they have in class.
14 Our teachers do not assign homework to them because they
15 are at school seven hours a day in classrooms working.
16 So, therefore, they don't go home with homework because
17 the teacher assigned them that homework. They go home
18 because they did not finish it during the class period.
19 That was what happens with homework in our building.

20 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Would you be going to talk
21 about an example of something that you envisioned for the
22 program?

23 MS. CLAYPOOL: For the middle school?

24 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes.

1 MS. CLAYPOOL: For the middle school, sure. So,
2 I've been tasked with CDE at the high school and I have a
3 vision right now to include our eighth grade students and
4 some of the CTE programs at Roane County High School so
5 that they could be starting on those pathways for
6 completion.

7 For example, I would like to see if we can get it to
8 work and happen is for students who are interested in, for
9 example, taking Graphic Design 1, Intro to AG 1, including
10 those teachers and those schedules with those students.

11 There was a short period that Roane County High
12 Schools did have three agriculture teachers and our middle
13 schools did get the benefit of having an AG program here
14 for like a -- I can't remember if it was a non-reach or a
15 semester, but we had to share the AG teacher. So, I feel
16 like that's something that we could work at, including
17 those eighth grade students for in the future. Anything
18 else?

19 MS. HUNT: I want to talk about the reference
20 transfer. So, for when you look at a consolidation or
21 closure, they call it a two personnel seasons. So, the
22 first thing that you would do, if that's the direction to
23 go, each faculty senate and each school will vote and each
24 service personnel and each school will vote. When those

1 votes are taken, they are voting on the new positions
2 created, so it would be at Spencer Middle School, Spencer
3 Elementary, those new positions that are created because
4 of the influx of students.

5 So, what happens is that if everyone says yes, those
6 teachers at Walton and Gary get first priority to those,
7 then that's the first personnel season. So, any of those
8 new creative positions, those teachers would go by the
9 highest seniority and you would go down the line and they
10 would have first priority to any new positions created
11 because of the consolidation of closure. If they would
12 vote no, that everybody in all schools wants that
13 opportunity to be able to have those positions, and
14 they're going to go through their regular transfer season,

15 MS. STELLATO: I want to go back to the Walton
16 Elementary/Middle School empty space situation. So,
17 again, as I said earlier, if we had a few more years, we
18 would definitely have some different plans.

19 Unfortunately, I'm going to talk about some facts here
20 that I've been asked to provide as well.

21 Unfortunately, when we started figuring out what
22 would our next move would be, we didn't quite understand
23 the impact of the deficit and just how grand it actually
24 was. Even with the reductions in the savings from this

1 year, it's still completely overwhelming.

2 So, I have gone on record numerous times saying that
3 the Walton setup here is ideal. I have a childcare
4 background from many years ago. And when you're creating
5 a childcare center, you're looking for two things. You're
6 looking for movement in place that you're going to have
7 supervision and you're looking for water. You've got to
8 have water readily available in every childcare classroom.
9 And this section of this building is ideal for that. So,
10 why didn't we move forward with it? We realized just how
11 great the deficit actually was. When we couldn't pay our
12 employees, not once, but twice, we had to call the state
13 and ask for an advance just to pay obligations to our
14 employees. We knew it was too late to begin moving
15 forward with something of that nature. So, that was one
16 of the main reasons.

17 I still believe with all my heart it's a viable
18 option in this building and it is something that should be
19 looked at in the future, regardless of how these hearings
20 turn out.

21 To address the 5:00 o'clock start time, to be honest
22 with you, we looked at the number of people that showed up
23 to the Walton hearing, or it wasn't a hearing, it was just
24 a meeting, a board meeting last year. There were so many

1 folks that attended. And so the idea was if we run out of
2 time tonight, right, because we're constrained, that we
3 must conclude this hearing by 11:00 p.m., or before 11:00
4 p.m., or we must continue at a later date. We were
5 concerned that we would run out of time for public
6 comment. In fact, our president created a very lovely
7 spreadsheet just for us for tonight to be able to
8 calculate quickly the reduction in times that would be
9 needed, you know, in excess of 50 or 60 folks showed up to
10 actually speak the CPIC. So, that was the main factor in
11 making that determination, realizing in hindsight that
12 yes, that definitely would be a barrier to some families.
13 And so that was the mindset behind why we did that.

14 That's also the mindset, as you experience tonight,
15 the technical difficulties of moving the location, right?
16 We wanted to be able to house or hold these hearings in
17 communities where they're going to be impacted versus
18 taking everybody into Roane County High School, which was
19 originally the thought process behind it, because it would
20 probably would be more comfortable with the seats that are
21 available in the auditorium at the high school, but
22 ultimately this is your community and that's the decision
23 of why those decisions were made.

24 In terms of loss of students, which was another

1 question a couple times that came up, we are anticipating
2 pretty drastic losses of students in relation to this. At
3 some point, we were calculating a 50 percent loss at each
4 school, which is about 200 students. That's catastrophic.
5 It is catastrophic. We know without a doubt that is going
6 to be something that we have to factor into and to begin
7 to plan.

8 Just to kind of talk about some of the factual points
9 about the spending in schools. The per pupil expenditure
10 is one of the things that we looked at

11 As Mr. Garner had talked about, the utilization rate,
12 which has been pointed to ad nauseam on us about how
13 underutilized our buildings are. And like Mr. Garner
14 pointed out, the sheer fact that we were able to move
15 teachers and leave an entire section of the building is
16 pretty remarkable. And the per people expend the two
17 terms actual piece as well.

18 When we look at spending per student in this area
19 versus spending per student in other areas, it's not even
20 close in terms of the way that our expenses are spent.
21 Stating per people, somebody asked about the loss. Ms.
22 Carvin handed me a post-it note here, \$6,196.48 is the
23 state aid side of what's lost every time we lose a student
24 to home school, to scholarship or a different county.

1 Additionally, we've lost since we started the process --
2 we looked since the book was completed and we certified a
3 new set of October 1 data. Gary lost an additional four,
4 we lost 100 students, almost 100 students countywide.
5 Fourteen of those students were at Gary and 32 of them at
6 Walton and that's from October 1st. That number continues
7 to move, as we said here. Any Other questions from
8 anyone?

9 I want to speak to another question. We're supposed
10 to maintain questions that are referenced by the impact
11 statement. There was a question made about tax base. I'm
12 curious about that myself, so we will attempt to
13 investigate that and share that information at a later
14 date. We did receive one written document, just so
15 everyone is clear, one letter that fell in line with the
16 way that written submissions are supposed to work, and
17 we'll address that probably at the Roane County High
18 School meeting next Tuesday night.

19 We had a question about looking at other district
20 consolidations. I'm not sure right now looking at this if
21 that was a reference of did we look at their consolidation
22 plan or have we looked at sharing services with other
23 districts. I addressed whether we looked at their plan
24 before. We did look at those as an example, but in terms

1 of sharing services, we do continue to investigate that.
2 Like Mr. Garner said, we were required to document where
3 other district students might go. That is documented in
4 the consolidation plan. And then we also continue on a
5 financial basis to look at shared services with other
6 districts. Currently, we are investigating one of those
7 with two other counties as we speak to address the
8 responsibility of care.

9 Absolutely. We understand that we have a
10 responsibility of care to all Roane County Schools'
11 children and then address that. One other thing that was
12 mentioned this evening is the PATCH program in the area.
13 Currently, as was announced at a previous board meeting,
14 Roane County High School did secure an actual 21st Century
15 grant that we wrote to be able to offer enrichment
16 services to our K1, 2, and 3 students as part of our
17 attempts to address the Third Grade Success Act and House
18 Bill 3035.

19 We currently have a coordinator who has been employed
20 to work that program and to be the leader of that program
21 and part of that also includes negotiations with the
22 current PACS program and getting those up and running.

23 We had several issues with an memorandum of
24 understanding that we've now addressed and gotten ready to

1 go for submission. So, that should be up and running
2 quickly as well.

3 Would you either have that or it's a national tackle
4 question that was asked about how special resolution would
5 be impressed with that, or do you want it?

6 Currently, we have five special education teachers at
7 our school. Two of our resource teachers, that means
8 those are the special education teachers that go into the
9 classroom and help children who have IEPs and then rule
10 them out as well. That's what in educational lingo we
11 call kind of the resource room. We have two resource room
12 teachers sharing a room because they're not in there at
13 the same time, or even if they are in the classroom at the
14 same time, it's very small groups, about five kids per
15 teacher, and they share a classroom just like our Title I
16 share.

17 We have three Title I teachers who share a classroom.
18 So, that's the way we handle the resource rooms. We have
19 two self-contained rooms, so those teachers have their own
20 individual groups.

21 Just as a county, we really appreciate and utilize
22 co-teaching as much as possible with our children. We
23 believe that the best way for them to learn is to be with
24 their peers and learning from the people that have went to

1 school to really be your strong reading and math teachers.
2 So that way they're inside the classroom and we always try
3 to go with the least restrictive environment for those
4 children, which is inside of the classroom as much as
5 possible, learning in that atmosphere. We will fill out
6 on a case-by-case basis. We're not cookie cutting by any
7 means. We're looking at the individual needs of the
8 student. So, that's a great question.

9 I found one more point on my notes here. The cost of
10 the car rider bus at Spencer Elementary, outside of a
11 little bit of extra fuel to run it. In fact, there is no
12 additional cost. That is something that the
13 transportation department was willing to do to provide or
14 lead to that. So, I just want to go on prior to saying
15 that as well.

16 MR. MACE: We will conclude the special meeting
17 and the hearing at Walton Elementary and Middle School. I
18 will now initiate a motion to adjourn until our next
19 special board meeting. That will be Tuesday, October 28,
20 2025, 5:00 p.m. That will be at Gary Elementary and
21 Middle School. The next regular meeting is on Thursday,
22 November the 6th, 2025, 6:00 p.m. at Roane County High
23 School. Need the motion. All those in favor, indicate
24 with saying I. Opposed? That motion is carried. Thank

1 you all very much.

2 (Hearing concluded.)

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,

3 COUNTY OF ROANE, to wit:

4 I, Lauren Belisle, Notary Public in and for the
5 State of West Virginia, duly commissioned and qualified,
6 do hereby certify that public hearing, was duly taken by
7 and before me, under the West Virginia Rules of Civil
8 Procedure, at the time and place and for the purpose
9 specified in the caption thereof; the said witness having
10 been duly sworn by me to testify the whole truth and
11 nothing but the truth concerning the matter in
12 controversy.

13 I do certify that the said hearing was correctly
14 taken by me by means of the Stenomask; that the same was
15 transcribed by me, and that the said transcript is a true
16 record of the testimony given by said witness.

17 I further certify that I am not connected by
18 blood or marriage with any of the parties to this action,
19 am not a relative or employee or attorney or counsel of
20 any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of
21 such attorney or counsel, or financially interested in the
22 action, or interested, directly or indirectly, in the
23 matter in controversy.

24

1 Given under my hand this 21st day of November,
2 2025.

3
4
5
6 *Dena Belisle*

7 _____
8 Dena Belisle, CCR
 Notary Public

9
10
11 My Commission Expires August 5, 2029.
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE

SPECIAL MEETING

GEARY ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE SCHOOL
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2025
5:00 PM

APEARANCES:

JEFF MACE, PRESIDENT
JAMES MINNEY, VICE PRESIDENT
EILEEN RICHARDSON, MEMBER
DARIS HARPER, MEMBER
DENNIS CARPENTER, MEMBER
ANN HARDMAN, TREASURER (*Appearing electronically*)
CORRIE OTA, SECRETARY
MICELLE STELLATO, SUPERINTENDENT
LORRA TANNER, DIRECTOR OF STRUCTURAL & PROGRAM PERSONNEL
AMY COLE, DIRECTOR OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS & COMPLIANCE
JERRY GARNER, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
MICHELLE ASH, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
SARABETH MONK, COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION SUPPORT
BRENDA BROWN, COORDINATOR OF TECHNOLOGY (*Appearing electronically*)
MEGAN STARCHER, PRINCIPAL GEARY ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE
LORI HAMRIC (COTTRELL), PRINCIPAL SPENCER ELEMENTARY
ANNETTE CLAYPOOL, PRINCIPAL SPENCER MIDDLE
JENNIFER HUNT, PRINCIPAL ROANE COUNTY HIGH

Erin E. Kincaid, RPR

I N D E X

SPECIAL MEETING: OCTOBER 28, 2025

<u>STATEMENTS:</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
MEGAN STARCHER	12
JOE WEILAND	15
VELVET NICHOLS	17
R.N. (A MINOR)	21
JUSTIN SHEARS	22
LINDA DRENNEN	25
CARRIE BRAGG	28
YAWANA SURFACE	32
LIDIA SURFACE	34
LANA UNDERWOOD	36
MICHELLE MCPHERSON	38
JACKIE HIGGINBOTHAM	40
BENJAMIN SHAMBLIN	44
CHAD PERKINS	48
VALERIE MACE	51
LEA RUNION	53
S.A. (A MINOR)	55
DAPHNE SMITH	57
LINDA KEATON	61

1	<u>STATEMENTS (Continued)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
2	STEPHANIE COWGER	63
3	SUSAN BEARD	64
4	E.S. (A MINOR)	67
5	JOE ROSS	68
6	M.B. (A MINOR)	72
7	JESSICA BOGGS	72
8	TERRA KEEN-SMITH	76
9	GABE BOGGS	79
10	KEVIN HALL	83
11	D.J. (A MINOR)	87
12	JANETTA MAY	88
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		

1 MR. MACE: Okay. Good evening. And welcome, everyone, to
2 the special meeting of the Roane County Board of Education.
3 Tonight's meeting purpose is to conduct a public hearing for
4 the proposed closure of the Geary and Walton Elementary-Middle
5 Schools, and the consolidation of their grades K through five
6 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades six through eight
7 into Spencer Middle School, and the consolidation of pre-K
8 students from all schools into the space now occupied by the
9 Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School.

10 Okay. I'll call tonight's meeting to order. All
11 board members are present. We do have a quorum. Okay. It's
12 now after 5:00 p.m. The registration to address the board at
13 this public hearing has now closed.

14 Okay. Just to read the statement, this hearing is
15 convened in accordance with the terms of West Virginia Code
16 18-5-13a --

17 We've got a speaker open. Testing. Test. Check.
18 Check. Check all your laptops and speakers. Good now? Okay.
19 Sorry. Start again. Okay. We'll start from the beginning on
20 the hearing script.

21 This hearing is convened in accordance with the terms
22 of West Virginia Code 18-5-13a and State's board of education
23 Policy 6204 in connection with the proposed closure of Geary
24 and Walton Elementary-Middle Schools and the consolidation of

1 their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades six
2 through eight into Spencer Middle School, and the consolidation
3 of pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied
4 by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High
5 School.

6 The statute and state board policy provide that
7 members of the public, one, have the right to be present; two,
8 have the right to submit statements and testimony; and, three,
9 have a right to question school officials.

10 Members of the public in order of sign-in will be
11 allowed to make statements, offer testimony, and ask questions
12 of school officials. A total of 31 members of the public have
13 indicated their desire to submit statements or testimony or to
14 question school officials. In order to give every speaker a
15 fair opportunity to submit statements and testimony and to
16 question school officials, five minutes have been allotted to
17 each registered speaker. The responses of school officials to
18 questions shall not be included in the time allotted.

19 No member of the public may present more than once.
20 No member of the public may grant time to another presenter.
21 Corrie Ota has been designated as the timekeeper and will
22 advise when one minute is remaining for each presentation and
23 when time has expired. It is not necessary to consume the
24 total amount of time allotted.

1 As stated in the public notice of this hearing,
2 written statements and materials that were submitted to the
3 superintendent before October the 24th, 2025, will be given
4 full consideration. That deadline has passed, and written
5 materials may not be submitted during this hearing. All
6 questions shall initially be directed to the superintendent.
7 The superintendent may elect to respond to the question or may
8 delegate another school official to respond to that question.

9 At the conclusion of all presentations by members of
10 the public, the superintendent or another member of the
11 administration will be given the opportunity to respond to any
12 information that has been presented by the members of the
13 public. Apart from the questions directed to the
14 superintendent and answered by the superintendent or another
15 member of the administration, there will be no direct debate or
16 dialogue between members of the public and the board members or
17 members of the public and school officials.

18 Action on the proposed closure of Geary and Walton
19 Elementary-Middle Schools, and consolidation of their grades
20 from K through five into Spencer Elementary, and their grades
21 six through eight into Spencer Middle School, and the
22 consolidation of pre-K students from all schools into the space
23 now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane
24 County High School will be subject of a board of education

1 meeting scheduled for November the 6th, 2025, 6:00 p.m. At
2 that time, the board will conduct all deliberations in open
3 session and a vote will be taken in open session following the
4 board's deliberation.

5 That concludes the statement for the hearing.

6 Ms. Stellato, we'll turn it over to you for your
7 proposed summary.

8 MS. STELLATO: Good evening, and thank you for everyone
9 that has joined us this evening. We thank you that you've
10 invested in this important public hearing regarding the
11 proposed closure and consolidation of Walton Elementary-Middle
12 School and Geary Elementary-Middle School, and the
13 consolidation of their grades K-five into Spencer Elementary,
14 and their grades six-eight into Spencer Middle School, and the
15 consolidation of all pre-K students from all schools into the
16 space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services
17 located in Roane County High School.

18 As required by West Virginia Code 18-5-13a, 18-5-13,
19 West Virginia Board of Education Policy 6200 and 6204, this
20 hearing and the construction of the required impact statement
21 provides an opportunity to present the rationale for proposed
22 changes; to share the data and planning that informed the
23 proposal; and, most importantly, to listen to the concerns,
24 ideas, and perspectives of our community.

1 On a personal and professional level, none of the
2 members of the leadership team sitting before you, nor the
3 members of the board of education wish to be engaged in this
4 process. However, we've been charged to lead the district
5 through this most difficult time; and, therefore, must
6 undertake this work. We understand the magnitude of the
7 decisions that will be made in the next few weeks, and we do
8 not take that responsibility lightly.

9 The purpose of tonight's hearing is not to finalize
10 any decision but to ensure that all stakeholders understand and
11 engage in the process; that you understand why the
12 consolidation is being considered; how it would affect
13 students, families, and staff; and what opportunities and
14 challenges this proposal presents for the future of Roane
15 County schools.

16 Over the past several years, Roane County schools has
17 faced a combination of challenges that are increasingly common
18 in rural districts in West Virginia: Declining student
19 enrollment and community population; rising operational and
20 maintenance costs for our older facilities; difficulty
21 attracting and retaining certified staff across multiple small
22 campuses; the need to provide equitable access to academic
23 programs, extracurricular activities, and student supports
24 across all of our communities; and the declining - now

1 negative - fund balance that is needed to effectively operate
2 our school system.

3 In addition, the State of West Virginia declared a
4 state of emergency in Roane County schools in July of 2025,
5 citing failure to approve the closure and consolidation plan,
6 budgeting deficiencies, building utilization well below
7 average, and a \$2.5 million deficit that has now been reduced
8 to 1.5 million or less and expected to climb 50 -- 500,000 to a
9 million more due to personnel overages from last year's
10 proposal -- or personnel season and the required addition of
11 special education staff that have been added this year.

12 Despite all of these hurdles, our goal is to ensure
13 that every child in Roane County, regardless of where they
14 live, has access to a safe, effective, and academically-strong
15 learning environment.

16 The proposal under consideration would close Walton
17 Elementary-Middle School and Geary Elementary School at the
18 conclusion of the 25-26 school year. They would consolidate
19 both school populations into Spencer Elementary, Spencer
20 Middle; and create an early childhood center in the Student
21 Support Services area at Roane County High School; and ensure
22 that transportation routes, staffing, and support services are
23 planned carefully to minimize disruption and preserve community
24 connections and reduce the fiscal deficit by approximately one

1 million -- or \$1.4 million annually.

2 This proposal is guided by the following priorities.

3 Educational quality. Improvement to the educational quality
4 for all of our students to offer a broader curriculum,
5 specialized teachers, and enhanced curricular opportunities;
6 equity for all students regardless of home community that
7 deserve access to comparable resources and facilities.

8 Fiscal responsibility. Consolidation would reduce
9 duplicative costs in administration, utilities, and facility
10 maintenance, freeing funds for classroom instruction and
11 student supports.

12 And long-term sustainability. A consolidation --
13 consolidated facility positions Roane County schools for stable
14 enrollment and improved efficiency for decades to come.

15 By now, I hope you've each had an opportunity and
16 taken the time to thoroughly review the impact statement,
17 supporting data compiled by the leadership team that sits
18 before you. The document was arranged with specific sections
19 addressing enrollment, facilities, finance, personnel, student
20 transportation, educational programs, and the community.
21 Tonight, we invite you to ask questions about the construction
22 of the plan and the future impacts of its implementation.

23 We recognize that schools are not only educational
24 institutions but anchors of the communities and a source of

1 identity and pride. We approach this process with respect,
2 transparency, and commitment to open dialogue. The voices of
3 Walton and Geary families, staff, and community members are
4 essential to shaping the final decision that the Roane County
5 school board will make.

6 Following tonight's hearing, all public comments will
7 be recorded and considered by the Roane County Board of
8 Education. The board will review the data, public input, and
9 recommendations before making a final decision on November the
10 6th.

11 Should the closure of consolidation move forward, a
12 transition plan will be developed collaboratively with staff,
13 parents, and community representatives. Change, especially
14 when it involves schools that have served generations, is never
15 easy. But as stewards of your children's education, we must
16 plan not just for today but for the next 20 or 30 years. Our
17 mission remains clear; to provide every student in Roane County
18 with the best possible education in a safe, supportive, and
19 forward-looking environment.

20 Thank you for your time, your participation in
21 tonight's hearing, and your continued commitment to your
22 children at Roane County.

23 MR. MACE: Okay. Ms. Ota, you may call the speakers.

24 MS. OTA: Thank you. Attendance is welcomed and

1 encouraged here. Speakers are asked to express themselves in
2 civil manner with due respect for the dignity and privacy of
3 others who may be affected by your comments. While it is not
4 our intent to stifle public comments, speakers should be aware
5 that, if your statements violate the rights of others under the
6 law of defamation or invasion of privacy, you may be -- that --
7 legally responsible. If you're unsure of the legal
8 ramifications of what you're about to say, we urge you to
9 consult first with your legal advisor.

10 As Mr. Mace has already stated, we have 31 people
11 would have signed up to speak today; therefore, each speaker
12 will have five minutes to speak. When your time is running
13 down, I will make this sound (one-minute timer) when you have
14 one minute left.

15 Okay. Let's see. Sorry. Our first speaker is Megan
16 Starcher. And following her will be Joe Weiland.

17 MEGAN STARCHER: Good evening, everyone. My name is Megan
18 Starcher, and I have the honor of serving as the principal of
19 Geary Elementary-Middle School. I want to begin by saying how
20 deeply proud I am of our school, of our students, our staff,
21 and the families who make Geary such a special place. It truly
22 is a community within a community. And it has been my
23 privilege to lead such a caring and dedicated group of people
24 this year.

1 As we gather tonight, I truly do have a heavy heart.
2 I recognize that I am new to the community and to the school.
3 And I'm viewed as a bit of an outsider. But Geary and Roane
4 County schools has already greatly impacted my life and is now
5 a part of my story, and I'm proud to be able to stand here
6 tonight and say that.

7 I recognize that this conversation is difficult.
8 Change, especially when it involves a beloved school, is never
9 easy. And I do understand that, both professionally and
10 personally, because I have been involved in school closures and
11 consolidations in the past. I was the principal of the HEY
12 (phonetic) Elementary just a little more than a year ago in
13 Clay County when it closed and consolidated with another much
14 larger school. And I witnessed firsthand the emotions, the
15 fears, and the uncertainty that comes with such transitions.
16 Change is never easy.

17 But with my previous experiences, I also saw
18 something special and remarkable. I saw how resilient children
19 are. But I also saw firsthand how greatly adult perspectives
20 shaped and influence the children that they were around.
21 Students often take their cues from us. They don't fully grasp
22 the financial or logistical reasons behind a closure unless
23 they hear the worry in our voices. What they do understand is
24 kindness, belonging, and love. And I know that those are the

1 things that they will continue to receive in Roane County no
2 matter which school they are at.

3 Our superintendent, Ms. Michelle Stellato, and all of
4 the principals across Roane County share a deep commitment to
5 ensuring that every child feels valued, supported, and
6 included. And if this consolidation is approved, I have
7 complete confidence that our students will be welcomed into
8 schools where they will both thrive academically and
9 emotionally.

10 And we all understand that this process is driven by
11 necessity. Roane County schools is facing a financial crisis.
12 And with the declining enrollment and rising operational costs,
13 it has become necessary to make difficult decisions to ensure
14 the long-term stability of our district and the continued
15 success of our students.

16 While Geary and Walton have been -- have long been
17 pillars of their communities, I do believe that there's
18 something meaningful about the vision before us; a vision of a
19 unified Roane County. A county where every student, every
20 teacher, and every family works together to work one common
21 goal; the success and wellbeing -- the success and wellbeing of
22 our students.

23 So tonight, while my heart is heavy, it is also
24 hopeful because I know that our students are strong, and I know

1 that our educators are compassionate, and I know that together
2 Roane County will continue to provide an excellent education
3 for every child that we serve.

4 Thank you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Joe Weiland. And
7 following him will be Velvet Nichols.

8 JOE WEILAND: Thank you. How was your all's drive? A
9 long one, I hope. Quite a ways to get through here every day.

10 This is one of my little neighborhood kids that
11 you're talking about sending to Spencer. He's first grade this
12 year, and he'll probably go to Clay next year if you all do
13 this. It's just wrong asking a little guy like this to go that
14 far.

15 I rode this bus when I was in school, and my daughter
16 did too. And you know, I got a couple questions though.

17 Why -- why is it not being investigated what you all
18 done with the money for the last two or three years?

19 Why is there not a criminal investigation?

20 You know, my oldest daughter, she wrote a letter. It
21 was talked about last night. But for ten years, I've been
22 predicting they'll close this school. She said, Dad, they
23 won't do that. They're not that cruel to these little kids
24 like that. I said, It's coming. They've got a plan. When

1 they laid the first brick out there, there was a plan.

2 And I'll make another prediction. You all need to go
3 buy you a mirror. A four-by-four or something. A big one
4 where you can look at yourself, if you can. Because whenever
5 there's a wreck out there on Clover on some sunny day when one
6 of these kids gets hurt or killed, you've got to look at
7 yourself because you could have stopped it. When one of the
8 kids in here have been picked on by the older kids, you all
9 could have stopped it. And one of the little kids use the
10 bathroom about Clover and the rest of them are making fun of
11 them, you all have got the right - each one of you now - to
12 stop it now. So go get you a mirror. If you don't have the
13 money to buy you a mirror, I'll buy you one. I got the money
14 on me now.

15 What about these special needs kids when they're
16 making fun of them? You all have been kids. You know what
17 it's like. You know kids are going to pick on kids. And that
18 school bus is a hard, long one. You talk about these special
19 needs -- I played football out here, and I rode this for four
20 years out here. And there's not a spot up through here and 36
21 I have not walked either way. Nighttime is hell on the way
22 back. I can tell you that.

23 And it's just wrong what you're all doing. And I
24 feel like anything I say here doesn't matter. It reminds me of

1 -- you know, I remember when Danny Harper (phonetic) and Gary
2 Grayhouse (phonetic) used to be up here with the board. They
3 stood up for the kids. They stood up for what was right. They
4 didn't stand up for a building. And I remember when Jim Bailey
5 was over the board -- school bus. He took up for the kids.

6 This little guy right here has got to figure out how
7 to get to a bus next year about a mile and a half down the road
8 for less than five minutes. His grandpa doesn't have a car.
9 And it saves less than five minutes. I know what Mr. Bailey
10 would have been doing. He would have been calling to
11 Charleston and straightening that up. He'd been taking up for
12 the kid. He definitely would have.

13 So that's all I've got to say. And we'll see you all
14 tomorrow night in Spencer. Thank you.

15 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Velvet Nichols. And
16 following will be RN.

17 VELVET NICHOLS: That's my daughter.

18 Good evening, board members, families, friends, and
19 neighbors. How is everyone this evening? Good, I hope. My
20 name is Velvet Nichols.

21 This way, baby.

22 We all know why we are here tonight, and it is trying
23 to save our schools. But before I get there, I would like to
24 apologize. I may say things tonight that might make both sides

1 mad. First thing, I have done nothing but research the problem
2 ahead. One of the biggest things is the overspending of the
3 new middle school; something we already understand. But why
4 did we have to buy a new school -- make a new school gymnasium?
5 Why --

6 You scared me, sweetheart.

7 Why couldn't they use the football field -- like use
8 the gymnasium like they used the football field?

9 We all know that money has been spent where money
10 didn't need to be, but you didn't make someone else's problem
11 your mistake. I have looked into a lot of numbers in the last
12 few days, and I can see where money can be saved, but I'll get
13 back to that.

14 I understand that you board members didn't come to
15 this decision easily. I know this. My dad ran a multi-million
16 dollar business. The owners told him they were going to have
17 to close it one -- close it --

18 Sorry. It's a long speech.

19 -- because the spending was too much to run it. My
20 dad didn't want to give up that easily. He told me. He said,
21 Look, sis, we don't give up on family. Right?

22 R.N. (A MINOR): Yeah.

23 VELVET NICHOLS: We don't give up and walk away. When
24 they're down, we help build them back up. First thing he said

1 we need to see where we can help them. He told the owners give
2 him a year. If -- if I can't get the numbers to come down in a
3 year, I will close it myself. That year was hard on all the
4 entire family. He was gone all week and only home on weekends.

5 Sorry. I'm nervous.

6 That year, I seen the look in his eyes the same as I
7 see in your all's tonight. He fought a good fight. But he had
8 to -- at the end of the time, he had to shut it down. It broke
9 his heart. It was the first time I ever seen my dad cry
10 because it destroyed family and community. So I understand
11 what your board members are facing tonight.

12 But if you could -- if I could throw out some ideas
13 your way and you all look -- relook at the books where some
14 money could be saved for the schools.

15 One of the biggest things is the different
16 communities -- have you come to the different community to see
17 ways they could help you raise money for the schools? I would
18 be able to help with bake sales, silent auctions, sometimes
19 with dinners. Ask the local women to make quilts for sales.
20 Go to local businesses to help with this. I know \$3 million is
21 a lot of money. But I know it comes -- when it comes to our
22 kids, parents will do almost anything they can for their kids.

23 Here's another way we can save money. Have you
24 members looked at the school buses? It takes \$360 to fill up

1 one of the full-size buses. That gives them an average of 500
2 to 940 miles a tank. A small bus takes \$216 dollars to fill
3 up, which give them an average of 720 to 1200 miles a tank.

4 Have you looked at the different bus routes to see
5 how many kids are on each road? I know some roads in these
6 hollows, there's only two to eight kids up each one of them.
7 Why couldn't you make a drop-off spot for the students and one
8 of the parents pick them up? Get a small van to pick them up
9 and drop them off from school. Or they can also walk home.
10 Believe me, I know. I did this for years. From kindergarten
11 through the 12th grade, I walked to my home every evening
12 because the buses are too big to go up my hollow.

13 Oh, sorry. Let me get to it. Okay.

14 Also, I noticed like with the lights. For your
15 utilities, it's costing between 36,000 to 72,000 a year. Why
16 do the lights have to be running all year long - the outside
17 lights - when there's nobody here? All you're doing is giving
18 a way for -- for criminals to break in. They don't need
19 flashlights to see to get into the school now. All they have
20 to do it break in, be on, and nobody will know anything. If
21 the lights are off, you will see them.

22 So please, members, look at everything. Go back to
23 the bus garage. Look. There is kids -- we can do this as
24 parents. I will pick them up myself and take them.

1 This is my daughter. She's virtual. She's just
2 started coming to virtual -- coming in person last year. We
3 found out she sees numbers backwards. They have helped her
4 here. If I don't bring her here, then you all have to find a
5 way to teach her over the internet. So right there is
6 another \$4,000 a year just for the virtual kids.

7 (One-minute timer.)

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. OTA: Thank you.

10 R.N. (A MINOR): Hi. My name is R.N., and I am nine years
11 old and in the fourth grade. I am one your virtual students,
12 but my mom brings me here in school every day. Soon I can --
13 extra help -- speech and reading. We -- we just started doing
14 in-person with -- and the teachers here -- last nine weeks of
15 the school -- most people don't --

16 VELVET NICHOLS: Speak up. Speak up. Know this about me.

17 R.N. (A MINOR): -- know this about me. I see letters and
18 numbers backwards. So my mom -- be good of --

19 VELVET NICHOLS: For me.

20 R.N. (A MINOR): -- today.

21 VELVET NICHOLS: To do.

22 R.N. (A MINOR): To do. In-person more with one-on-one.
23 But closing is (indiscernible) I will not be able to do this
24 because I -- my mom will not be able to drive to Spencer every

1 day. So please save Geary school so my school can be --
2 help -- help me. I need --

3 Thank you.

4 VELVET NICHOLS: Believe it or not, a year ago, you
5 wouldn't understand her. And I'm serious. That's how much --
6 she was the principal here when R. started. She's seen most
7 people couldn't understand her. This is new for her. This is
8 the first time she's ever done this. And, actually, I'm so
9 proud of her for this.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Justin Shears.
12 Following will be Linda Drennen.

13 JUSTIN SHEARS: Good evening. I believe that we have now
14 at this point established that this impact statement was
15 prepared in a way to intentionally underestimate cost
16 associated with executing the plan, overinflate annual savings,
17 and devalue community impacts. I had some questions.
18 Hopefully we do a little better tonight with capturing the
19 questions and actually answering them.

20 But do you feel it is ethical to intentionally leave
21 out costs associated with the plan, such as rebranding?

22 I have the same question with inflating annual
23 savings. The value of this plan has been stated at \$1.4
24 million annually since the beginning. In the first month, we

1 lost 25 students, which is nearly a quarter million dollars a
2 year just with state funding.

3 There seems to be something going on behind the
4 scenes, and I'd like to ask. Have you been directed,
5 intimidated, or personally threatened legally by an outside
6 entity to carry out this plan?

7 (Applause.)

8 JUSTIN SHEARS: Why do you think that every clerical
9 mistake in this statement is an error in the plan's favor?
10 How do you move forward with estimations that are
11 already invalid?

12 Knowing the amount of students that will leave the
13 district for more realistic opportunities, is it safe to say
14 that the students of southern Roane County are acceptable
15 losses to the district?

16 Would you agree that this plan almost seems to work
17 better facilities-wise if our students leave?

18 By -- by our own trends and your numbers, we're
19 easily going to reduce enrollment to -- to at least 1400
20 students, which I understand is kind of a wiggle-room cliff
21 when funding -- as far as funding goes by this time next year.
22 With only accounting for state funding, this devalues the
23 annual savings by \$1 million dollars per year. If federal
24 funding was only \$2,000 a year, this would increase the

1 devaluation to 1.3 million per year.

2 This -- this plan doesn't save money, it cuts off
3 half the county, and does nothing but accelerates our young
4 talent from leaving the county. Are you ready to hold that
5 responsibility?

6 The writing is on the wall. This -- like I said,
7 this plan has devalued every month it's gone by. Since you
8 froze numbers for the statement to October 1st, we had already
9 lost 25 students. Many parents here have been perfectly honest
10 with the fact that we are not going to do this to our kids. I
11 literally worked for 24 years -- I left and worked for 24 years
12 so I could bring my kids back here for this. This was our
13 forever dream. Not a year later, we're already being chased
14 out.

15 I've heard many times why do people -- why are people
16 leaving Roane County? Many of you should ask your kids, why
17 did they leave? Because I know for a fact many people sitting
18 here had children that went through Roane County, and they're
19 not here anymore.

20 I tried to come back. And we're just making it
21 harder. What young family in their right mind would come to
22 southern Roane County when there's not a school within 20 to 25
23 miles?

24 (Applause.)

1 JUSTIN SHEARS: This plan doesn't save money. It looks
2 good on paper. But I ask you, what has gone on behind the
3 scenes? At least stand up and be honest. I read an article
4 from Randolph County where one of their board members was
5 honest that they were taken in by the state board in a training
6 and directly told how if they don't make the right choices
7 financially that they're going to be targeted with criminal
8 charges and held personally accountable. Is that happening
9 here? At least we could understand that a little better.

10 But it just doesn't make sense. It's so easy to poke
11 holes in this plan. I know you guys -- I know you guys are
12 intelligent people and you're smarter than what's in this
13 paper. So we need some answers.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Linda Drennen. And
17 following, will be Carrie Bragg.

18 LINDA DRENNEN: Hello, I'm Linda Drennen. I live here in
19 Amma. My kids went to Geary school. I grew up in Charleston.
20 Came here when I got married. Was on the PTA. Then it went to
21 PTO and a variety of other things. The school was a school of
22 excellence. We were very proud. We still are proud of our
23 school. We're proud of the students, the teachers, the
24 volunteers, the bus drivers -- everybody who works here. These

1 people give it all.

2 We don't have a Wendy's here, a McDonald's, or a
3 courthouse. Not even a stoplight. But we don't care because
4 we still love our community. We still love our people here.
5 We love our schools. If this school goes away, this will just
6 end up a retirement community. Nobody is going to want to come
7 here. Remember years ago, we had people that have called and
8 say, hey, we're interested in coming to your area. Tell me
9 about your schools. If that would happen the next year or the
10 year after, whatever, and they say we don't have schools here,
11 who's coming here? Nobody.

12 I know people, as Justin said, want to come back here
13 because they enjoyed their lives here as kids. But times have
14 changed. The almighty dollar has kicked in. We've lost sight
15 of the fact these kids are waiting on the adults to take care
16 of them. They feel lost. They feel abandoned. And I think we
17 do also. Things are not good.

18 We voted for and trusted that the board of education
19 would take care of our schools, the students, teachers, staff,
20 bus drivers, and other employees, along with the volunteers
21 that continue to come and give their time, money, and efforts
22 to make things happen here. What we need are elected officials
23 to step up and remember who voted you into the office.

24 Who are you going to support when the times get

1 tough? Don't turn a deaf ear to these folks.

2 Who wants to move to a community who has no school?
3 We have a post office, a couple of convenience stores. That's
4 it.

5 I find it hard to believe we had a superintendent, an
6 assistant superintendent, and a school board who acted like
7 they didn't know the situation was happening. I was shocked
8 when I read the paper. Everybody should have been. People
9 from out of state are calling, saying, What's going on? I
10 moved away many years ago. What's happened to our little
11 community?

12 It's falling apart. I feel like we're on the
13 Titanic, and we're the last ride off the board. That's sad.

14 During a board meeting - and you can check back on
15 your notes with a county office and Corrie in October -- it was
16 either '22 or '23 when Andrew Matheny (phonetic) was Treasurer
17 of the board. He told the board that at that time and at that
18 meeting that there was no money for turf for the high school.
19 There was no money to build a middle school. It went on deaf
20 ears. Everyone voted in favor of that. And I'd like to
21 commend Mr. Minney. He voted against it. It's in there if you
22 want to go read that.

23 Since then, because of that action, Andrew Matheny
24 resigned from the Roane County Board of Education and went to

1 work at Glenville State College. As we know, both the turf
2 went down. We now have a middle school. Andrew Matheny's info
3 that he spent a lot of time and effort and being paid to
4 present to the board, the realities of what's happening, nobody
5 cared. So he went to work at Glenville.

6 If we were in such dire straits, why did we hire an
7 assistant superintendent at that time? Again, more money we
8 didn't have. Not well spent.

9 I understand there is a room at the new middle
10 school. You can go check that out. That's full of furniture -
11 brand new - that's never been used. Maybe then we can return
12 that and get a refund and put that money back in the coffers.

13 (Applause.)

14 LINDA DRENNEN: I am hurt, disappointed, and sad that we
15 are even having this meeting as are so many other people in
16 this county.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Carrie Bragg. And
20 following will be Yawana Surface.

21 CARRIE BRAGG: Hi. I'm Carrie Bragg. I've never done
22 anything like this in my entire life. I'm a new school mom.
23 My daughter goes to kindergarten here, R.B. I grew up and went
24 to Cedar Grove Community School. It was also a kindergarten

1 through eighth grade school, and I loved it. The community,
2 the closeness that everybody had. Even the people that you
3 really didn't like and got on your nerves, you really still
4 liked them and you cared about them.

5 But then I went to Riverside High School. Let me
6 tell you, there was about a thousand of us walking around that
7 school, and it was scary. I came from my little community.
8 And I'm not saying that I shouldn't have been prepared or I
9 shouldn't be prepared for the world because, trust me, I know
10 the world is a scary place. But I can't help but feel like I
11 got to do everything I can to keep my own child protected.

12 And, you know -- you know, this is like a piece of
13 gold right here. I don't think you understand. There are kids
14 dropping dead like flies in schools in these big cities. I
15 refuse to take my child to a city where she's going to get shot
16 up. And I'm not saying it can't happen here. I'm not saying
17 it can't happen anywhere.

18 But I can't help but feel like I'm being forced out
19 of my country -- I mean, out of my country setting. My rural
20 setting. My -- this -- this community -- I wasn't born and
21 raised here. I love it though. I met my boyfriend at the
22 time, who's now my husband 15 years ago. He lived here. He
23 brought me here, and I was like, wow, this is home. It's
24 beautiful. I had horses. This is just like -- you know, we

1 talked about it. How can you get the best of both worlds? We
2 live on a farm but have a school less than ten minutes away.
3 And I know there's someone here who just recently built a big
4 beautiful home off the Amma exit. And I know that she did that
5 considering that this school was right here.

6 Not -- I work in Elkview. I'm already forced to have
7 to leave the county to work because I can't afford to feed my
8 family if I'm going to work here. And the only place to work
9 is Spencer, and we all know that we're not going to get paid
10 enough working in Spencer. So I've went on to bigger places.
11 And it's scary having to drive all the way there. But the idea
12 that it works -- okay. I have to be forced to leave to work.
13 Okay. I'm resilient. I'm tough. Well, I'll do whatever I
14 have to do. I will take care of my kids. And just like that
15 last speaker said, if that means leaving the county and taking
16 my kid to another county, I will. I will.

17 Spencer is another 30 minutes the opposite direction.
18 For the love of God, I couldn't even imagine having to afford
19 the gas to go get my kid from school at least a couple times a
20 week with me working all the way in Elkview, close to
21 Charleston. I don't know what I'm going to do. And I know
22 that there's a lot of people here that don't know what they're
23 going to do.

24 And, you know, just like a lot of good parents do,

1 you -- you look up a school. You know, you look up those
2 statistics. How well these kids are learning. Academics here,
3 pretty average. It's fine. Average, Cedar Grove. I'm not
4 looking to be like the smartest person in the world. I'm --
5 and I want my daughter to learn.

6 But you want to know what stuck out -- really stuck
7 out about this place? It's the overall behavior of the school.
8 It feels like above standard. It was like the behavioral. So
9 I kept looking, and I kept looking. And I never dreamed about
10 this. But there was a statistic on the amount of kids that
11 were homeless that went to this school. And all I can think
12 about is how many kids are really going to fall through the
13 cracks. Because let me tell you something, it happens.

14 I went to Riverside. My freshman year, we started
15 out with 400 students. You want to know how many graduated?
16 Barely 200. We lost half of us to lots of things. I
17 personally got sexually assaulted my sophomore year. You know
18 what? I went to the -- I went to the office seeking help. I
19 was a number in that school.

20 I had to wait three weeks just to get an appointment
21 to speak to the principal about that. And within that three
22 weeks, I got badgered and, oh, you just need to drop it because
23 the boy that sexually assaulted me was a star football player.

24 So I know exactly what happens. I know what happens,

1 and I know what gets brushed off. Because when there's too
2 many kids crammed in a school, they fall through the cracks.

3 (One-minute timer.)

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Yawana Surface. And
6 following will be L.S.

7 YAWANA SURFACE: Hi. My name is Yawana Surface. I am a
8 Walton Elementary and Middle School graduate and a Roane County
9 High School graduate. I lived almost all of my childhood here.
10 I lived in a little hollow out in Walton. The bus would drop
11 me off. After I got off the bus, about an hour and 15 minutes
12 as a high school student. And then we also had an activities
13 bus, which is another question I have for the board members.

14 Is there a plan for an activities bus? Because I
15 think a lot of our children like in Geary and Walton are going
16 to be deprived of extracurricular activities if we do not have
17 an activities bus if this consolidation goes into effect.

18 But back to my story. When I was a high school
19 student, it was very difficult for me, as a high schooler - you
20 know, 14 through 18 years of age - getting off a bus at
21 around 6:30 at night, having to walk two miles to my home down
22 a hollow because my mom couldn't come to get me. I don't know
23 how you expect children who are younger than that to deal with
24 that.

1 I'm very concerned with, also, special needs
2 children. I have four children that go to Geary and one that
3 goes to the high school. My son here, who is 11, and he is in
4 sixth grade. His name is A. And I really feel like this is a
5 community for him. His classmates are wonderful. He's in the
6 special needs program. His teachers are fantastic. I can't
7 say enough good things about Geary. I'm really sad that it may
8 be closing.

9 My concern about the special needs program
10 specifically is that I know that a lot of the schools like
11 Walton and Geary and Spencer are already overwhelmed in the
12 special needs program. I'm wondering what's going to happen
13 when we throw all of the kids from Walton and Geary in an
14 already crowded, overstimulated population in the Spencer
15 special needs program.

16 Are there plans going into place that have maybe
17 numerous special needs classes? Or is there just going to be
18 one special needs class?

19 Another question I have is about ABA services, which
20 I mentioned in my son's IEP most recently, about two weeks ago,
21 needing ABA services. I just wanted to throw that out there.

22 Let me see. Yeah. Those are my two main concerns.
23 The activities bus for sure. If we don't have an -- activities
24 buses, we're just throwing children under the bus - pun

1 intended - because if children cannot participate in
2 extracurricular activities, they're taken away from their
3 community. They are deprived of the ability to put that on the
4 college applications. You know, it affects them in a lot of
5 ways. You know, they can't participate in band or sports. I'm
6 very concerned about that.

7 And, yes, very specifically concerned about the
8 special needs program as well. So if those issues can be
9 addressed, I would really appreciate that as well. Yeah. So
10 that's all I had to say. And my mother-in-law --

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Lidia Surface.

13 Following Lidia will be Lana Underwood.

14 LIDIA SURFACE: Good afternoon. This does normally affect
15 the parents. But I'm a grandmother, too, of her children. I
16 have four grandchildren here. And the special education -- I
17 mean, I have an autistic grandchild. And when I moved here
18 in 2008 from Virginia, I have lived most of my life here in
19 this country.

20 And I -- when I move here, my son brought his first
21 two grand -- grand -- I mean, his first two daughters. They
22 were small, and they came to this school too; L and S. And I
23 was happy because this school was close to my house. And they
24 took the bus. And they didn't have to, you know, wait for that

1 long for the -- for me to pick them up. And it was hard.

2 It was hard on the grandparents, too, because some
3 days, you know, we get up and -- with pains in our bodies, and
4 we -- we'd have to drive all the way to Spencer? That will be
5 harder. In this school, everybody has been wonderful to my
6 grandkids. Now that I have four grandkids and I have taken
7 care of them part of the time that the parents haven't been
8 around, and they both had to work. And it will be hard to go
9 to Spencer because gas prices. Sometimes, we don't even have
10 gas money.

11 It's a dire situation. And I'm sure all the parents
12 have that concern about the school closing. And I wish all of
13 you can find a way to keep it open.

14 And it came to me the other day. I thought about go
15 to Washington, ask for help. When we have a disaster, we ask
16 for help. And I think we should. There's so many concerns
17 about this -- this school closing because my -- my grandkids
18 have -- they get a good education here. They've -- all this
19 stuff is wonderful. And I think you all should help. And I
20 agree with everyone here, their concerns.

21 That's all I --

22 (Applause.)

23 LIDIA SURFACE: -- have to say.

24 MS. OTA: Next, we have Lana Underwood. And following

1 will be Michelle McPherson.

2 LANA UNDERWOOD: Good evening. Because I'm old enough,
3 I'm going to take a trip back in time. I am a Roane countian,
4 and I was raised in a rural setting in the country, up a dirt
5 road that I still live on. That time valued all individuals
6 who worked to provide opportunities for everyone but especially
7 the youth. Complacency was not tolerated. Failure meant
8 finding a better way. And everyone was expected to contribute
9 to improve and correct the task or whatever problems we faced.

10 I attended Gandeenville Grade School. Yes, 70 years
11 ago. It was later closed and consolidated. I graduated from
12 Walton High School. Yes, 60 years ago. It was later closed
13 and consolidated. That structure has been repurposed
14 successfully.

15 The next 20 years of my teaching career was spent
16 traveling around the state and other counties. I taught at the
17 old Spencer Elementary School. Yes, 40 years ago. It was
18 closed and sold very cheaply. That structure is now utilized
19 daily successfully. I taught at the old Spencer High School
20 when it became Spencer Middle School. It was closed and sold.
21 That structure is also being repurposed for community services.

22 The 2018 school bond levy passage was a message of
23 trust that the funds would be utilized efficiently and fairly.
24 Seven years later, we are asking why. How did we become this

1 financial disaster?

2 The words spoken in these hearings are a means of
3 diplomacy. As concerned citizens, we are seeking alternatives
4 that will not continue to deplete our vigor and our ranks. As
5 I watch families leave our communities and schools, their fear
6 for Roane County schools is real.

7 The actions that have brought us to this juncture are
8 disheartening to say the least. I truly believe that there are
9 means to correct some of the mistakes which we face. And we
10 must seek to continue to seek solutions. You hear the people
11 of these communities. But we must sustain accountability.

12 We have the basics; the structures, the staff, the
13 curriculum, the transportation, et cetera. So very much of
14 these basics will be lost with consolidation. My second
15 graders acknowledge can and can't, and possible and impossible.
16 What message are we, as adults, focused upon now?

17 Is there only one solution named close and
18 consolidate?

19 You represent us. Improvement breeds success. Be
20 diligent. Persevere to find solutions for the community
21 schools; solutions guided by responsible accountability
22 measures. Allow our students in the current schools to
23 prosper, not wither and die. Their pride is motivational and
24 contagious. Make the right decisions for our children. We can

1 overcome.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to serve and to speak.

3 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Michelle McPherson
4 followed by Jackie Higginbotham.

5 MICHELLE MCPHERSON: Good evening. I would like to begin
6 this evening by addressing the community section of the impact
7 statement on pages 47 and 48. On page 48, section two, it is
8 titled, "How the Existing Known Relationships Could Be Impacted
9 By The Proposed Action." The following was written about Geary
10 Elementary School. "The existing relationship between Geary
11 Elementary-Middle School and its community could be affected by
12 closure because the community utilizes the building and
13 facilities for events. Closure may cause the building to no
14 longer be available to the community for gatherings and
15 events."

16 I believe these three lines -- three lines greatly
17 underestimate the detrimental effect that the closure would
18 have on our community. This is not just a building and
19 facility for events. Geary Elementary-Middle School is the
20 heartbeat of the community and houses our most precious assets;
21 our children. The effect of closing this school will be
22 devastating for community events, local businesses, and
23 opportunities for our children in the most rural parts of our
24 community.

1 Moving on to some of the questions I have regarding
2 the other portions of the impact statement.

3 Transportation. It is my understanding that the 104
4 number we have heard is the number of students whose parents
5 will have to drive in excess of two miles and be paid by Roane
6 County schools to transport their child to a bus stop. My
7 question is: How many children who have previously had a bus
8 come to their house will no longer be picked up from their
9 homes?

10 How many parents will have to drive their child to a
11 bus stop, whether that be above or below the two-mile limits?

12 While I believe Spencer Elementary School is a
13 wonderful school, we are looking at the impact this closure and
14 consolidation will have on all our schools. We have all heard
15 about the parking issues at SES and that they are working to
16 find solutions. My question is: What is being planned to
17 mitigate the additional overcrowding at Spencer Elementary
18 School, not only pick-up, but navigating a building at capacity
19 and hosting events at the school?

20 Next, I would like to talk about the loss of
21 enrollments. Last night at Walton, Ms. Stellato said we are
22 projecting a loss of enrollment of up to 50 percent, which
23 would be close to 200 children. The amount of funding we
24 receive per pupil was stated last night at \$6,196.48. This

1 equates to a projected loss of funding of \$1.2 million. The
2 net cost savings in closing down both Geary and Walton
3 referenced in financial table 11 on page 29 is \$1.4 million.
4 It seems as though the cost savings does not balance the impact
5 this will have on our community.

6 We have heard at length about the additional
7 opportunities awaiting our students should these closures
8 occur. With such a potential steep decline in enrollment and
9 the state funding that goes with it, are we going to be able to
10 still provide these promised opportunities?

11 In closing, I want to thank you for your time and
12 attention this evening. I hope you will truly consider the
13 impact this closure and consolidation will have before making
14 your final decision.

15 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Jackie Higginbotham,
16 followed by Benjamin Shamblin.

17 JACKIE HIGGINBOTHAM: Good evening, everybody. My name is
18 Jackie Higginbotham. I live and work in this community. I'm
19 the first grade teacher here at GEMS. Forty-five years ago, I
20 walked through the doors as a student myself however. My
21 family moved to Roane County the summer of 1981, so I just
22 barely missed that very first day of occupancy, March 10, 1981,
23 the exact -- when the last school consolidation touched our
24 community and the closure took effect.

1 However, I didn't start -- I did start the very first
2 full academic year in the fall as a fifth grader with about 400
3 other kids that came from the Left Hand school, the Linden
4 school, the Newton school to make this school. And I was so
5 saddened to hear last night of the shared experiences of the
6 Walton community of when they consolidated from their high
7 school to Roane County High School. So many had trauma from
8 that closure that I do not think that was our experience with
9 the first consolidation in this community. The little schools
10 brought together such a wonderful community that is still going
11 on 45 years later.

12 But it's unlikely I'm going to have any new questions
13 to add to what you guys are going to hear from last night,
14 what's going to come after me. Any other powerful statement to
15 make that other voices will not have spoken through the same
16 microphone this evening. We all share the same sentiment.
17 Walton, Geary communities, we love our schools. We want to
18 keep our schools in our communities. But I'm speaking anyway
19 on behalf of our students and their families that we serve.

20 Our days are spent on this beautiful inviting campus
21 with other people's kids; our friends' and our neighbors' kids.
22 Our families most cherished and celebrated treasures; the kids
23 of southeast Roane County. We work hard to provide them
24 stability, safety, structure, routine, and other countless

1 positive benefits and opportunities and experiences that can
2 only be afforded by attending a local public school. A local
3 public school enriches life at every level for the kids in our
4 county, and we do it right here. We really try to do it right.
5 And I take such pride every day I walk through this parking lot
6 to come inside.

7 If this closure --

8 (Applause.)

9 JACKIE HIGGINBOTHAM: -- and consolidation does get
10 approved, and having thoroughly read the impact statement that
11 was released, it seems that it's very plausible we're going to
12 close these doors. Our towns and families are never going to
13 reap a much -- our families and towns will reap a much
14 different result than which was produced in 1981 from the small
15 local schools combining to make this one.

16 Instead of bringing families together, having a
17 central place close to home to learn, roam, discover, and
18 belong. That's been mentioned before. Belong to a wonderful
19 class of peers, a sports team, a music ensemble -- just a group
20 of friends that will shape and define them for a lifetime. Our
21 families are going to be scattered.

22 At the very best, families are going to have to just
23 choose the best option available to do what they can to make
24 the logistics work with their job, with their car, with the

1 distance, and what will support their child's growth and
2 development. It's going to look different for so many
3 families. We're all going to be doing different things.

4 It seems to me, many families from this district will
5 opt for the homeschooling route to simply ease the
6 transportation and extended school day concerns. Those who do
7 commit to moving to the receiving schools in Spencer, as
8 Ms. McPherson said, we work with these people. They are our
9 colleagues.

10 Every county school in this district in Roane, they
11 have good people. They try. They put forward. They network.
12 They -- they -- we work. We try to get it done. So those
13 receiving schools will be challenged to attain -- it's going to
14 be challenging to attain faithful attendance because of the
15 hardships wrought by the coordination of meeting -- of time to
16 catch a nearby bus. The lengthy commute will undermine
17 educational opportunities, academic performance, and
18 extracurricular participation. Larger class sizes will limit
19 students being easily recognized for their unique gifts and
20 talents.

21 So I'm respectfully asking -- actually begging our
22 board to delay any decision to close or consolidate gyms at
23 this time but rather exhaust every possible -- you know, every
24 possible avenue to keep it serving our local families at this

1 same address with the hope that enough voices and unrest will
2 result in rewriting the school funding formula in Charleston
3 and support small rural schools where real, authentic
4 whole-child, standards-based practices are happening. I know
5 our board office employees have worked tirelessly with this
6 leadership team to devise a solution. I'm asking you, please
7 try again. Please try gain.

8 I don't know what that looks like. Between now and
9 November the 6th, what does that look like? If we would have
10 something now that you have this huge document called an impact
11 statement. I don't know.

12 (One-minute timer.)

13 JACKIE HIGGINBOTHAM: Try again. We're asking you, please
14 try again.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Benjamin Shamblin
17 followed by Chad Perkins.

18 BENJAMIN SHAMBLIN: Evening. I've been to a lot of
19 meetings in my lifetime. And most time, we used to say the
20 Pledge of Allegiance or say a prayer before you start. I did
21 not see that in here to start with. You got military personnel
22 that's been here, retired and active. So that would have been
23 a great respect to do as a community to start with, hands down.

24 So I supported a lot of the kids in this county. I'm

1 sure several of you know who I am. I started -- I went to
2 school at Geary, then Roane County High School. My brother and
3 I started a business which I think is pretty successful. We've
4 been in business for 16 years, and we're really good with
5 supporting the kids.

6 So I got the -- on Thursday, I opened the newspaper,
7 and I got my tax tickets at the same time. So I opened it to
8 see there wasn't no preschool at Geary. My son started
9 preschool this year. So I opened my tax ticket and alone just
10 to the school levy, I'm paying over \$5,000 in this county to
11 school taxes, not counting the other property taxes I pay. So
12 it was a pretty hard blow that I had to read it in the paper
13 that it was closed -- the preschool here and we're talking
14 about closing this school and Walton as well.

15 So for that \$5,000, if I could keep that, I could
16 take my son to school in Spencer way easier than paying the
17 county to -- I'm going to call -- wasteful spending that we had
18 done. So if you do close Geary or Walton in the southern
19 Roane, all you're going to make is a nursing home,
20 realistically. There's probably going to be no young people
21 moving in. You're going to have the older people there. And
22 they're going to want their yards weed eaten or mowed. Who are
23 they -- going to do that for them? Most time, you get these
24 younger kids for weed eating for a little extra gas money and

1 growing up. It's really going to affect the family and the
2 students around here.

3 You say that in your opening statement that you're
4 going to know the effects. Do you really? At heart, do you
5 really know what the effect that's going to happen here? I
6 mean, there's going to be loss of kids. I guarantee you. I
7 don't know exact numbers in this school. Two-hundred-and-some
8 kids would be my first guess. I bet you lose 35 to 40 percent
9 with ease not going to Spencer. I can see it.

10 I mean, I've even --

11 (Applause.)

12 BENJAMIN SHAMBLIN: -- considered talking my kid to Clay
13 County and driving every day. Because the money I've spent as
14 a business owner, I've really considered pulling out of the
15 county and going to another county. Because, I mean, the tax
16 money I'm paying is not going to help the kids here. It really
17 gets on my nerves, to be flat honest with you.

18 I'm trying to -- I mean, I consider myself a godly
19 man. I've said a prayer before I come here. I'll be flat
20 honest with you. So most people know me. Know I go to church.
21 So I won't be at the meeting tomorrow evening. Sorry. It's
22 church night to start with. So I think God should be first in
23 anything you do. And that's the reason I said we should have
24 said a prayer before we started tonight. I know not everybody

1 believes in God, but you need to hear the gospel about that
2 one.

3 (Applause.)

4 BENJAMIN SHAMBLIN: Sorry. So if you do think you're
5 going to consolidate this school and close it, I have one
6 question. I've talked to a lot of people. What do you want
7 for it? I'll find a way to make her open. I've talked to
8 people about keeping it. I've talked to people about making a
9 Christian school out of it.

10 I know with the Hope Scholarship, it don't cost a lot
11 for parents to bring their kid to school. I know an parent of
12 five has done talked to her Christian school in Spencer. And
13 with the Hope Scholarship, it was only going to cost her \$76
14 dollars a month to take them five kids. So that would be
15 cheaper than busing her -- the kids -- her -- parents have to
16 go clear to Spencer to start with.

17 (One-minute timer.)

18 BENJAMIN SHAMBLIN: \$76 dollars is nothing nowadays. You
19 can't go to the grocery store for that. But I guarantee the
20 gas money they would save, that would be money in their pocket
21 to be here.

22 So I've also heard rumors - I don't know if this is
23 true or not - that they've done talked consolidation so far
24 that they done picked out a mascot for the whole county. If

1 they're doing that, then your all's minds are already made up.
2 And ain't none of this meeting is going to help anything if
3 that's the truth.

4 Now, I've also heard rumors that no matter what we
5 say, the state is still going to close it down. But I know as
6 well as I do, you've got to balance the budget. But you should
7 have caught this a long time ago. This should not have been
8 just affecting the past six, seven months. This should have
9 been seen three years in advance to start with. This would not
10 be hard.

11 For anybody that had me in school - teachers and
12 stuff - I'm good at math. But if you want me to write you a
13 story, I ain't writing.

14 (Timer ringing.)

15 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Chad Perkins followed
16 by Valerie Mace.

17 CHAD PERKINS: Thanks, Corrie. All right.

18 We're told to judge a tree by the fruit it bears.
19 Well, here we are. The people assembled here and the people
20 assembled last night are largely the fruits of Roane County
21 schools. And we care about it. We've done what we were
22 supposed to do. We grew up, found work, found someone to love,
23 and we had a family. And for many of us, all of that led to
24 growing our family in Roane County.

1 I say all that to punctuate the point that we come to
2 these meetings and give so much of our time and energy not
3 because we're still looking for someone to blame. At least for
4 me, the time to blame has passed. It passed without
5 satisfaction or fruition, but that time has passed.

6 We come and we do all this because we're invested in
7 building and supporting a community our grandchildren -- and
8 I'm only 40. I know I probably look younger, but I'm only 40.
9 But I would like to build a community and support a community
10 that my grandchildren would be proud to live in.

11 These buildings and the opportunity to get an
12 education in these buildings is a significant part of that
13 community. What stands between here and there is your ability
14 to vote no.

15 (Applause.)

16 CHAD PERKINS: Here are three concise points to support
17 that vote and help you explain the same if you are confronted
18 by state, quote, unquote, authorities.

19 Number one, the impact statement is inaccurate,
20 incomplete, and insincere. The community has and will continue
21 to present evidence to support that point.

22 Number two, the format provided and approved by the
23 state isn't adequate. And by their own admission, it does not
24 allow for county administrators to effectively address the

1 community, children, or financial impacts in the macro.

2 Number three, financial estimates have and continue
3 to change beyond an acceptable variance by any reasonable
4 measure. Even with the state's oversight and mentorship,
5 figures have changed multiple times in multiple ways by six or
6 seven figures. No competent manager or board could make a
7 decision until there is resolution and until there is alignment
8 amongst its own leadership.

9 For those reasons and others yet to be presented, I'm
10 sure, I urge the board to reject the closure plan.

11 Lastly, I also want to echo Justin's comments and say
12 publically that, if you are being pressured by another member
13 of the county board, by the state board, by the department of
14 education to vote any certain way, it is your duty as a
15 representative of the districts one, two, and three in Roane
16 County to speak up and speak out.

17 (Applause.)

18 CHAD PERKINS: Until county boards start saying no and
19 start to wrestle back local control from the state, the
20 legislature will not act. But if enough county boards speak up
21 and speak out and say no, the legislature will be forced to
22 act. Until that happens, until this board has the courage --
23 and I know it takes courage, and I don't envy you. But until
24 this board has the courage to vote no and push back on what the

1 state is forcing you to do, nothing will change.

2 Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Valerie Mace, followed
5 by Lea Runion.

6 VALERIE MACE: Good evening. I'd just like to address the
7 enrollment projection for Geary. I feel like the 35 percent
8 decline over the last ten years that we've had in enrollment,
9 and then the next ten years it's projected as a 71 percent
10 decline. I feel like this was based on an outlier.

11 We had our preschool program with seven kids enrolled
12 and were basically shut down in June. I think we would have
13 brought more kids in. We have historically brought more kids
14 into the preschool. We had 17 two years ago. Nineteen last
15 year. And our kindergarten has been close to capacity or over
16 for the last two years.

17 So I believe the enrollment projection that's in the
18 report is -- is based on an outlier and just wondered if the
19 validity of that was investigated and whether or not that --
20 you know, you can't just look at that -- that one number for
21 that one year. Our drop in enrollment in Geary this year was
22 14 students. Seven or more of those would have been pre-K, and
23 some of those were students that transferred out because of the
24 impending closure. The PK playground should not have been

1 pulled until the vote foreclosure was taken. As one of our --
2 (Applause.)

3 VALERIE MACE: As one of our parents previously stated at
4 a board meeting, let us have our year.

5 When facility senates vote -- this is a statement and
6 then a question. When faculty senates vote on the teachers
7 from Geary and Walter receiving priority for open positions at
8 the other three schools, is this a head-count vote or one vote
9 per school? Because we'll -- obviously, we have less staff at
10 Geary and Walton than are at the other schools. So I feel like
11 we need to know a little bit more about how -- we hope it
12 doesn't go that way. But we need to know a little bit more
13 about how that's going to work if it does.

14 Also, we love Ms. Cottrell. We love Spencer
15 Elementary. But it's -- it's one of the oldest facilities in
16 the county, and it was built for K through two students. So
17 why in the impact statement is there no significant facility
18 cost expected if you have a projected 95 percent utilization in
19 that building? I feel like there's going to be -- there's
20 going to be facility costs. There's going to have to be
21 upgrades and a renovations done to that building. But none of
22 that -- none of that's in there.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 (Applause.)

1 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Lea Runion, followed
2 by S.A.

3 LEA RUNION: Good evening. My name is Lea Runion. I
4 teach 6th through 8th grade social studies and English language
5 arts this year. Let's just start with, wow, that's a lot. I
6 would do it every day of the week because our kids need to be
7 here.

8 Most of the concerns that I have heard through the
9 hearings, through the talks, focuses on the littles. I want to
10 take a minute to talk about the middles. Sometimes we forget
11 that our middle school kids are kids. We look at these big
12 bodies, we look at these big emotions, and we think they're
13 grown. They're not. They need to feel safe. They need to
14 feel secure. They need to know that they are loved and that
15 they are wanted.

16 I hear the conversations that my students have in the
17 classroom. They don't feel valued. They don't feel wanted.
18 They are scared of what is coming next year. And that breaks
19 my heart.

20 I lost one of my highest achieving students. Friday
21 was her last day because she went to Elkview. She was a leader
22 in my classroom. We lost her. We lost one last year. He
23 didn't even start the year. He was a leader in the classroom.
24 He's gone. So if the leaders are gone, what's left?

1 Middle school is hard at the best of times. And if
2 we move forward with consolidation, it's not going to be the
3 best of times. Therefore, my question to you, what plan do we
4 have, should the consolidation move forward, to merge the
5 culture of our three schools together to create something new?
6 Or are the Tigers and the Panthers going to be expected to shed
7 their fur and become Yellowjackets? That's the kids' fear.

8 I have heard statements that this is a positive step
9 forward for our sports team. On one side of the coin, I would
10 agree with you. However, on the flip side, not so much.
11 You're going to have students who don't make the team because
12 there's not enough room. So you're going to have kids that
13 would have had the opportunity here or at Walton that won't if
14 they go to Spencer Middle School because there's just not
15 enough space on the team.

16 The other aspect is the travel time. I live 45
17 minutes in that direction. I drive 45 minutes every day
18 because this is where I want to be. I love our community. I
19 love our school. They're my family. I fought so hard to be
20 here this year so that my daughter could finish her year here.
21 She's in 8th grade. Unless we have that athletic bus, you
22 know, a lot of kids can't participate because their parents
23 work in Charleston, or they work in Elkview, or they don't have
24 a car. They can't drive to pick their kids up.

1 I know at the end of the day, as educators, we're
2 going to come together, and we're going to make it work because
3 that's what we're told to do. Figure it out. And,
4 fortunately, we do pretty well at that. But, ultimately, the
5 students are the victims of the decisions made by the adults
6 who are supposed to be working with their best interests at
7 heart. In the end, they're the losers in this situation, and
8 they have absolutely no control.

9 Therefore, my plea to you is, as we move forward,
10 keep the kids in mind. Make the decisions not only with your
11 mind but with your heart, and do what's best for the kids at
12 Geary, at Walton, at Spencer Middle, and at Spencer Elementary.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have S.A., followed by
15 Daphne Smith.

16 S.A. (A MINOR): I would like to say that Geary is like a
17 big family. Although we are a small school, we have a much
18 bigger heart than you can imagine. I've spent the past ten
19 years at this school. The fact that our county board of
20 education has let us down like this is disappointing as well as
21 discouraging. Two schools with so much history are facing
22 being shut down.

23 Let's be honest, Geary and Walton aren't really even
24 rival schools when it comes to sports. At the most recent

1 volleyball tournament, both teams came together and supported
2 each other. Even when we had to play against each other, we
3 were still supporting each other. This goes to show that
4 students have a bond. We may be from different schools. But
5 at some point, we have to unite and be one.

6 I would also like to add that at our last -- at one
7 of our past volleyball games against Webster and Geary, the
8 first thing that our Webster volleyball team came in and said
9 was how amazing our facility was. How beautiful it was and
10 they were in awe. And to let that down to where nobody can
11 play in this gym anymore is disappointing.

12 When I was faced with the possibility of having to
13 move to a different school last year, I was so upset. My mom
14 was already making plans to help keep me at Geary, and I'm very
15 thankful to be here today. I would like to point out that I
16 live on the other side of Spencer, making Geary 45 minutes
17 away.

18 My point is, I could drive 20 minutes to Spencer
19 Middle School every single day. However, my mom chose Geary
20 because that's where she felt I belonged. And for 10 years I
21 have rode 45 minutes to and from school every day, and it's so
22 worth it.

23 Geary and Walton are both very important to me. My
24 mom teaches here at Geary. But while she was pregnant with me,

1 she taught at Walton. My aunt teaches at -- or at Walton. And
2 both of my cousins have went to Walton. So for not one but
3 both to facing a possible shut down is not a good feeling.

4 Last season, I ran track for Geary, but I was
5 constantly surrounded by the Walton team as well as coaches.
6 And I can assure you that I made many friends from Walton.
7 Although we were on different teams, no matter what, even when
8 we were -- even we were competing in the same events, we still
9 cheered for each other. And if it does come down to losing our
10 schools, I hope that you regret what you have done to cause
11 this because now our Tigers as well as our Panthers are facing
12 the loss of their school because of your mistakes.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Daphne Smith, followed
16 by Linda Keaton.

17 DAPHNE SMITH: Hello. So I graduated from Geary school
18 in 2000. I graduated from Roane County High School in 2004.
19 In 2013, I was hired on as a teacher here at Geary school. At
20 that time, I have teaching 6th grade. There were a lot more
21 students here in 2013. And I've seen the enrollment drop over
22 the years, and that makes us all the more sadder.

23 So as I'm looking at the points that I really want to
24 talk about, it's kind of a repeat of what everyone else has.

1 Buses and transportation are one of the biggest ones.

2 So, currently, my junior in high school rides the bus
3 from Geary. He still catches the bus here in the morning. He
4 gets on the bus about 7:20, and he gets to the high school at
5 about 7:58. Now, he says that time varies greatly. He says
6 that he has to grab his breakfast from the kitchen, book it to
7 his locker, and get into his first period class after the bell
8 has rang.

9 So if he caught the bus from our one-mile long
10 driveway that is less than three miles up Amma road, he would
11 actually be catching the bus at about 6:10, and he would be on
12 that bus until he got here at 7:20. Then he would of course
13 get onto the high school bus that he would then take to the
14 high school. So that is about two hours.

15 So last night, I was looking over the information in
16 the impact statement. And I have to say I am a fairly educated
17 person. The language in that impact statement is atrocious.
18 It is very difficult to follow, and it is very difficult to
19 understand. And we talk a lot about reading levels in our
20 community. And I think it's going to be very difficult for a
21 lot of adults to be able to understand some of those words. My
22 husband and I even had to look up a couple.

23 So in that impact statement, it talks about bus
24 times, and it talks about that the route that currently takes

1 my son almost two hours, if he rode it all the way around and
2 these times are -- in the current bus schedule is going to be
3 down to about 55 minutes, I believe, as I was looking at them.
4 And this is from Amma Road all the way to up the high school.

5 And I know it says there is a modified route. Or the
6 route is going to be modified. I would like to know exactly
7 what those modifications are that's going to cut that route
8 down that significantly.

9 I also want to think about, as I was here as a
10 teacher as Geary school, I saw many high schoolers get off the
11 bus to use the bathroom in the morning before going on to
12 Spencer. Now, I don't see it in the afternoons, because I am
13 still here picking up my son because if he rode the bus home,
14 while he gets here at roughly 4:10 - it changes from day to day
15 depending on traffic - he wouldn't get home until 5:20. So
16 since we live three miles up Amma Road, I stop here to pick him
17 up.

18 So I think about the fact that a lot of high
19 schoolers struggle with holding their bladders that long. And
20 I feel like for our younger children that's going to be very
21 difficult.

22 And then I also think about how -- how important
23 mornings are for our little guys. So I'm currently employed at
24 Spencer Elementary School. And I see these little people

1 getting off the school bus. And I know how important mornings
2 are. And to think about any child coming into a school system
3 and being disregulated [sic] from the beginning -- I know how
4 much it's going to set off their day.

5 So I also want to look at this as cost standpoints as
6 well. So we need to definitely make sure that we are losing
7 the least amount of staff possible. Just in these three months
8 that I've been at Spencer Elementary School, I am more than
9 confident that those teachers are going to be able to
10 successfully support these students. They are going to love
11 our students. As teachers, we love our students. And we make
12 it work. We work hard to make it work. But we need to make
13 sure we limit those cuts.

14 Transparency is my last point. We were told that
15 this year was going to be different and that we were going to
16 have complete transparency. And I feel as though we need to
17 make sure that we continue forward with that and that
18 transparency needs to be given in a decent amount of time. So
19 we want to make sure that anything that is -- is coming up,
20 that it is being presented to the public, and it is being
21 presented to the teachers of Roane County.

22 We want to know what's happening so that we can
23 better support our students. We want to be there for our
24 children. And we want to make sure that we are there for our

1 children. So parents and teachers need to have that
2 transparency going on so that they can make informed decisions
3 to support our students going forward.

4 (One-minute timer.)

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Linda Keaton, followed
7 by Stephanie Cowger.

8 LINDA KEATON: Hi. My name is Linda Keaton. I think most
9 of you guys probably know me. I've worked in every school in
10 Roane County over 28 years now. My most favorite is this
11 school. My niece, Amanda, is an employee here. My niece,
12 Ashley, is the gym teacher here. My sister, Cathy, is a
13 substitute secretary here. Just because they're my immediate
14 family doesn't mean that everybody else here is not my family.
15 We are all family, and we all pull together.

16 (Applause.)

17 LINDA KEATON: And when the going gets tough, we don't
18 give up. We push harder. I want to know if everybody can -- I
19 want you to raise your hand if you can tell me what the sign
20 out on the front of our school says. Does anybody know? There
21 are actually two signs. The first one says Geary
22 Elementary-Middle School, West Virginia School of Excellence
23 1991, 2000. That says something for a little community like
24 this. There's a sign above it that's just as important. It

1 says, at Roane County -- or Geary Elementary-Middle School, who
2 I am makes a difference.

3 Our kids have a chance to succeed here. Not that
4 they won't in Spencer or whenever they end up. But if you
5 close this school, I hope when you go to bed at night your
6 conscience is clear that you had enough reasons to do that.

7 (Applause.)

8 LINDA KEATON: One other thing. And I feel like it's the
9 most important thing. We didn't make the decision to spend
10 this money and get in debt. But yet teachers are the ones that
11 lost their jobs. You guys all still have jobs. Teachers do
12 not.

13 (Applause.)

14 LINDA KEATON: And there's one piece of this puzzle that's
15 missing, and he was the one in charge when all of this started
16 coming down. I feel that Dr. Duncan needs to make an
17 appearance and face all of us and hear what we have to say.
18 He's not the only one that was in this decision making, but
19 he's one of the main ones.

20 And, once again, I'm proud to be a Panther. I'll
21 always be a Panther. And I feel if you close this school, it
22 will be the biggest mistake that you ever make.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

1 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Stephanie Cowger,
2 followed by Susan Beard.

3 STEPHANIE COWGER: Good evening. My name is Stephanie
4 Cowger. I'm not a public speaker. So if I talk fast, you'll
5 have to overlook me. Try to keep up.

6 I'm here as a parent. I'm mad. I'm shaking mad that
7 we've made it this far. It should have never got this far.
8 There's so many bad decisions that have been made that I don't
9 know where to begin. But to start, my family lives right next
10 door. My family was forced by imminent domain to sell part of
11 their family farm to add on to this --

12 (Applause.)

13 STEPHANIE COWGER: -- ten years ago. And here we are ten
14 years later. My family took it on the chin and accepted it
15 because it was for this community. It was for our kids. For
16 our generations. And to be here, it's a joke. It is an
17 absolute joke.

18 My husband and I are both Geary kids. Right here.
19 Whenever we looked for property, we looked here because this is
20 the school we wanted our kids to go to. We refused to buy
21 anywhere else. This school is so much more than a school.
22 This is the foundation of this community.

23 When Geary has a bingo, you better get ready because
24 everybody comes out. We come out for our kids.

1 (Applause.)

2 STEPHANIE COWGER: This community is more than numbers.
3 Our kids are more than numbers. Honestly, I'm like a lot of
4 other parents. I am tired of fighting about this because I
5 know you all have made up your decision. You -- despite how
6 everybody feels, you all have made your decision.

7 But I won't give up. I will always fight for my
8 children. Because if this happens, I will not hesitate. My
9 kids will not go to Spencer.

10 (Applause.)

11 STEPHANIE COWGER: My kids will be homeschooled or my kids
12 will go to a private school because this -- this -- our kids
13 deserve so much better than this.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Susan Beard, followed
17 by E.S.

18 SUSAN BEARD: My job this evening is to share a letter
19 with you all from -- that was published in the county paper
20 about three weeks ago, I believe. And the woman who wrote it
21 is an alumni of both Geary and Roane County. And Ms. Weiland
22 is currently a professor of education and social policy at the
23 University of Michigan and testimony to how Geary kids excel.
24 She really is.

1 As a Geary and Roane County alumni, I have followed
2 the heartbreaking Geary-Walton Elementary-Middle School
3 consolidation proposal closely. Despite what the consolidation
4 impact statement says, this is no opportunity for Geary or
5 Walton kids, families, and communities. This is a tragedy, but
6 it's one that the Roane County Board of Education has the power
7 to stop. The impact statement falls short in many ways. But
8 the bus ride times --

9 You've heard that over and over tonight.

10 The bus ride times especially appear to be pure
11 fantasy. Take Grannies Creek, my old route, as an example.
12 One can barely, by car, with no stops, complete the route in
13 the time listed in the impact statement, which is 57 minutes.

14 I would suggest that you would be speeding if you got
15 out of there in 57 minutes.

16 (Applause.)

17 One -- one can barely -- one can barely, by car, with
18 no stops, complete this route in the time listed in the impact
19 statement.

20 Three generations of her family rode the bus from
21 Upper Grannies to Spencer High for high school.

22 It was an hour and a half ride each way and that was
23 before the recent change which sends the bus up Hollywood,
24 tacking on an extra -- extra time for Grannies Creek kids. I

1 cannot find any explanation in the impact statement for how the
2 bus times were calculated.

3 Before the board even considers voting yes, each
4 board member --

5 And I totally agree with her on this.

6 Before the board even considers voting yes, each
7 board member should personally ride the buses --

8 (Applause.)

9 SUSAN BEARD: -- from deep in the hollows to Spencer to
10 investigate the truth. The community deserves the truth and
11 full transparency about what is being proposed.

12 Let's be clear about what is at stake. The proposed
13 consolidation will hurt children. If the board passes this
14 proposal, they are sentencing even the smallest children to a
15 two-and-a-half-hour-plus commute each day. Even worse, buses
16 will no longer come to the homes of over a hundred children.

17 The plan makes huge assumptions that families have
18 reliable transportation and that parents' work schedules can
19 accommodate meeting the buses. Those who make it to Spencer
20 will be exhausted by the commute, which will harm their
21 attendance, wellbeing, and academic development.

22 Ms. Weiland was co-valedictorian in her class at
23 Roane County --

24 (One-minute timer.)

1 SUSAN BEARD: -- and, eventually, earned a doctorate from
2 Harvard.

3 Without a doubt my four years in Roane County High
4 School were the most exhausting in my 23 years of formal
5 education. I had to pull very long hours with very little
6 sleep to compete with the town kids. It is one thing to put
7 such a commute on a teenager for four years. It's quite
8 another to do so for a preschooler for 14 years.

9 I'm not going to be able to finish in the time
10 available. But the bottom line is the board and the
11 superintendent have lost a great deal of trust in the county.
12 Keeping Geary and Walton open will help restore some of that
13 trust. And you need to show the leadership and vote no on
14 consolidating Geary and Walton.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next is E.S., followed by Joe Ross.

18 E.S. (A MINOR): I don't think you should close the school
19 because a lot of kids have gone here for their whole lives.
20 And I moved here from Virginia and all the people were nice to
21 me. And I was shy at first -- at first. But when I got
22 through a few days, I was not shy anymore. That is why I think
23 you should not close the school.

24 Thank you.

1 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Joe Ross, followed by
2 M.B.

3 JOE ROSS: Good evening. I want you to take a good look
4 around. Look at this room. Look at the staff behind me.
5 Isn't it beautiful? We're going to lose a lot of that. Okay?
6 We are. All right. If you know me, you know -- most of you
7 do -- you know I'm a fighter. You know I'm a worker. And
8 that's what we're asking from you tonight.

9 Also, I pay my debts; what I owe. What you owe these
10 students, what you owe these teachers, what you owe these
11 communities is a safe education, a fair education, an equal
12 education for every child. They're not going to get that.
13 Okay? You know, they're on buses for three hours. I don't
14 know who put the time together on some of this because it looks
15 look a fantasy.

16 We -- we -- every child in this county deserves to be
17 picked up in front of their house, taken to school, and brought
18 back. That's what we pay our taxes for. That's what we pay
19 the levee for. Okay? That's what's expected here. Okay? All
20 of this is just absolutely -- we have a choice. Okay?

21 Mistake were made. We understand that. We have
22 we've -- we've got over a hundred students that's going to have
23 to walk two miles. Maybe they don't walk. Maybe their parents
24 can get them there. Maybe they can't. We have 77 sex

1 offenders -- registered sex offenders in Roane County. This is
2 not safe, guys. There's no way you can tell me that this is
3 safe.

4 And from what I can understand and what I can see
5 here is Spencer Middle -- Spencer Elementary is at 94 percent
6 capacity. Population is like weather; it changes. Okay? What
7 happens when Spencer Elementary is full? What do we do with
8 the kids then? What do we do with them? Okay?

9 You know, we're forcing people to do homeschooling.
10 We're going to lose more than we can gain. I hope you guys can
11 see that. Okay?

12 There's a lot to say here. A lot of people have
13 spoken tonight, and they have done very well. Some of these
14 students -- I mean, it's a credit to our young people. It
15 really is, you know.

16 And we're asking you, you know. You got -- each one
17 of you guys were elected to fight for the kids in this county.
18 I know when -- when we elected Jeff - and I don't mean to call
19 you out - you know, we said, well, hey, great, Jeff is from
20 here, you know. We've got somebody representing, you know, the
21 Geary district - okay - just like every one of you were elected
22 probably by most of the folks that were in your district, and
23 we expected you guys to fight for us. Okay? That's why we --
24 that's why we asked for you guys.

1 You know, it -- I don't know how we can consciously
2 do this. We cannot -- we cannot guarantee these kids a safe,
3 fair -- what we've done is -- you're disabling our children.
4 You're putting our children at a disadvantage in these -- at
5 Walton and Geary because they're not going to be able to do the
6 things and the extracurricular activities, the things that they
7 do at the other schools. Only the kids closer to the schools
8 will be able to do that or kids whose parents -- I had dental
9 surgery. Sorry -- parents who have the ability to get them
10 there for after school.

11 There won't be -- there won't be three ball teams
12 anywhere. There will be one. Kids are going to miss out on
13 opportunities. They're going to miss out on scholarships. You
14 know, it's not fair. It's -- again, you're disabling these
15 children. They're actually disabled because they're not going
16 to be able to get the same education. These, you know,
17 three-hour bus rides every day. You know, getting home, you
18 know, half an hour before dark or dark, leaving before that.
19 And safety? How in the world -- would you let a 12-year-old --
20 your 12-year-old daughter walk two miles in the dark in the
21 morning to a bus stop? I wouldn't. I don't think anybody here
22 would. I really don't.

23 (Applause.)

24 JOE ROSS: I don't think -- you know, because that's who

1 we are. We know, you know, educating children is not a money
2 maker. I know that. Okay? It costs money. And if that's --
3 if we're not getting enough money, then we need to go to the
4 legislature, and we need to demand that they give more money so
5 that we can provide these services for our children. I
6 personally will go. And I hope other people do.

7 But, I mean, all -- all we're asking here is that --
8 we elected you folks to fight for us. Okay? Eileen,
9 Mr. Minney, Jeff, Dennis, Daris, what we're asking you to do
10 is -- you have a vote. Vote no. That's all you have to do;
11 vote no.

12 (Applause.)

13 JOE ROSS: We're asking that you -- we're asking each
14 and -- each and every one of you to fight for us. And if you
15 can't, then we will -- I -- this is not a threat. I'm just
16 telling you. We will file a class action lawsuit. Probably
17 won't have any trouble raising money. You know, we do that
18 very well here. And if we can't raise the money, then Carla,
19 my wife, and I --

20 (One-minute timer.)

21 JOE ROSS: -- we'll personally pay for the attorneys to
22 file a class action.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have M.B., followed by

1 Jessica Boggs.

2 M.B. (A MINOR): Hi. My name is M. I am a student at
3 WEMS, and I have been one for nine years. I feel like the
4 students I have grew up with are more than a family to me than
5 classmates.

6 I do feel bad for myself, but I feel even worse for
7 the younger students at Geary and Walton that won't get to
8 experience the memories I got to experience in middle school.
9 My mom has brought me 45 minutes to school at Walton for nine
10 years because she believes that that's where I belong. I have
11 bonded with so many kids from Geary, and I feel grateful for
12 that. I feel bad for all of the teachers and students, but I
13 feel even worse for my aunt, my mom, and my best friend, D.
14 Nobody deserves to be put in this position that you're putting
15 everybody in.

16 I will always be thankful for all of my teachers and
17 my classmates. I don't like seeing any of the teachers or
18 students suffer from things that shouldn't have ever happened.
19 And you should be ashamed for your mistakes.

20 Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Jessica Boggs,
23 followed by Terra Keen-Smith.

24 JESSICA BOGGS: Good evening. My name is Jessica Boggs,

1 and I am the mother of two very wonderful Geary students and
2 the product of the Roane County school system, including a
3 Geary alumni. I moved away from this area to attend college at
4 WVU and lived an additional 15 years in Monongalia County. As
5 you probably know, Ms. Stellato, Monongalia County is one of
6 the best public education systems in the state.

7 But we, as a family, chose to move back to Roane
8 County specifically for my children to attend Geary school.
9 When I was younger, I personally attended larger city schools;
10 one in Fort Worth, Texas, and then after that in Akron, Ohio.

11 Before moving to Geary -- once I moved to Geary
12 school, I just wanted to say that was the first place I felt
13 noticed, the first school that was truly investigated in my
14 education, and the first place that feels like home.

15 My point to all this is not -- my point to all this
16 is that while the impact statement has lots of supporting data
17 about money saving efforts for our school system, I feel it
18 doesn't truly show the impact that it has on the students of
19 Geary and Walter Elementary-Middle.

20 While we think of education as an curriculum for
21 math, science, English, it is also a partnership for the
22 overall wellbeing of our children. In essence, that's exactly
23 why teachers tell us -- remind us to make sure that our
24 children have adequate sleeps, good breakfasts, provide snacks

1 for test days. Wellness plays a huge role in education. And
2 I'm positive that, if this consolidation takes place, that
3 children will receive the same curriculum; however, I don't
4 believe that children in Geary and Walton areas will receive
5 the same opportunities.

6 Others have already addressed most of my questions
7 tonight. Bus times that are listed -- I just don't fully
8 understand the times and how they're calculated.

9 I know in the impact statement it is mentioned that
10 uniting students at Spencer Middle School particularly will
11 provide the same level of support, opportunity, and access to
12 programs. It goes on to say that students will benefit from a
13 full range of extracurricular activities, including athletics.

14 So going back to my wellness of the student. My
15 daughter is a multi-sport athlete. And I feel a lot of her
16 success in school is enforced by her hard work and her
17 extracurriculars. Extracurriculars such as band and sports
18 provide a sense of belonging, some exercise, and an opportunity
19 to showcase their talents as students, all feeding into their
20 physical and mental wellness as a student.

21 I feel that once this consolidation happens, that
22 those equal opportunities for these outlying areas of the
23 county would be very limited. The only way to get to practices
24 and games would be for us to drive them. My current drive to

1 Geary school for my children -- for specifically my middle
2 schooler to go to practice is three minutes. This will then
3 turn into 35 minutes one way.

4 Most successful teams have multiple practice days a
5 week. And I'm asking if there would be willing -- if you would
6 be willing to budget for alternate transportation for these
7 children to have access to extracurriculars that would
8 ultimately provide them with a better educational experience.
9 Many of the children here at GEMS have opportunities here such
10 as small things like singing the National Anthem at a game,
11 their teams practicing multi days a week, Christmas concerts,
12 Veterans Day programs.

13 (One-minute timer.)

14 JESSICA BOGGS: And I feel that all these small things
15 will no longer be accessible for students and their families on
16 the Geary and Walton ends of the county due to transportation
17 limitations and distance.

18 Lastly, there's a few things I don't really
19 understand in the impact statement, but I feel they've been
20 addressed here tonight. So I'm hoping that -- that you will be
21 able to provide answers, and I'll better understand why this
22 closure is suggested.

23 And that's all.

24 (Applause.)

1 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Terra Keen-Smith,
2 followed by Gabe Boggs.

3 TERRA KEEN-SMITH: Good evening. As she stated, my name
4 is Terra. And I stand before you as a member of this community
5 my whole life, a parent of two children that I (indiscernible)
6 school. I graduated Geary, volunteer fire department in this
7 community as well as a provider at Southern Roane Medical
8 Clinic. I'm speaking to you this evening due to several
9 concerns I have, not only for my girls, but my patients and
10 community.

11 My husband and I both attended small schools. And
12 that's what we wanted for our girls. We actually live on
13 Linden Road. That is essentially a halfway point between Geary
14 and Spencer Elementary. Several of our neighbors' children go
15 to Spencer. We chose for our girls to come here because of the
16 smaller class sizes; the more one-on-one that they would get.
17 Being with the people that they start school with all the way
18 through eighth grade. There's people in this auditorium that I
19 went to kindergarten with all the way through 12th grade and am
20 still friends with. Those are lasting relationships. And I
21 feel that in bigger classroom sizes they will miss that.

22 These children here at this school are welcomed every
23 morning by this staff, not just walking them in, but it's, Good
24 morning. How are you? They know every kid that gets out of a

1 car by name. They know their families. Their siblings. What
2 their home life is like. They know my kids and their little
3 quirks they have.

4 I love the interaction that my kids have with these
5 teachers. The fact that if my kids are not feeling well during
6 the day or something is wrong, that teacher reaches out to me
7 and lets me know, hey, something was off today. Let me know if
8 there's something I need to do to help them.

9 In the impact statement, as has been said, there was
10 not a whole lot for this area put in there affecting community.
11 These children have access to a library that I noticed the
12 wonderful women that work in that library are here tonight that
13 love these kids coming up there. These kids have programs that
14 they do with them, and it's always a joy for them to come in.

15 As I said, I work at the clinic up here. And I mean
16 no disrespect by this but, it is called Southern Roane Medical
17 Clinic for a reason. We are the southern part of the county,
18 and I am very proud of that, that it is called that. It is our
19 area. I fought to work there to be in this area, to be by this
20 school for this school as the provider. Kids come to me when
21 they're here sick. They can come back to school. They don't
22 have to miss school to go to Charleston or be picked up at
23 schools in Spencer to be taken somewhere else. They come up to
24 me. If they're fine, they come back, and they can enjoy the

1 rest of their day.

2 This area is also used as a warming station, Red
3 Cross center which is not mentioned in your statement. The
4 fire department is a big community aspect for this school.
5 They are willing to show up anytime they are asked whether it's
6 to provide education to this school, to be here for open house,
7 or trunk-or-treat.

8 Our community is the bigger umbrella for this school
9 than was stated. We may not have a lot of bigger convenience
10 stores and banks and businesses, but we have family-owned
11 businesses that partake in helping with fundraisers --

12 (One-minute timer.)

13 TERRA KEEN-SMITH: -- and committing to this school.

14 Most of my stuff that I had wrote down has been
15 addressed about bus times and all of that.

16 My question to you, as a healthcare provider, is, how
17 are you going to address these children's mental health?
18 Anxiety, depression, ADHD is more prevalent in school-age
19 children than you realize.

20 (Applause.)

21 TERRA KEEN-SMITH: We're taking them from an environment
22 that they are comfortable with, that they can approach any one
23 of these teachers and talk to them, instead of being labeled as
24 the bad kid or disruptive kid and being sent to a different

1 area of the school.

2 My last part -- it has been stated by Ben Shamblin
3 this evening -- it's been discussed by several people in this
4 community about purchasing this school to provide a private
5 school. I am more than willing to help with that -- anybody
6 that wants to do it.

7 (Timer ringing.)

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, is Gabe Boggs, followed by
10 Terri Myers.

11 GABE BOGGS: I'd like to start today by saying how proud I
12 am of our staff and our teachers for being brave enough to
13 speak up. And I hope you stand by your no retaliation plan
14 because I imagine we'll be hearing something in the rumor mill
15 soon as the way things have tended to go up to this point,
16 ma'am.

17 Since you are addressing questions, as you said last
18 night, I'd like to start by reading an email that I sent to
19 you, Ms. Stellato, on September 16th, the day after Mr. Perkins
20 and Mr. Shears and I came to the board office.

21 Ms. Tanner, you were there, I believe.

22 And -- and I thought I'd send you an email because
23 you kind of mentioned at the meeting the night before that you
24 plead for the community's help. So I put this together over a

1 month ago, yet to get a response because I don't matter. No
2 one matters.

3 I'm writing as a concerned parent and a community
4 member seeking clarity on the county's school funding and
5 facilities decisions. I believe that greater transparency
6 could help the public work with you to address the challenges
7 facing our schools, particularly in rural areas. I understand
8 there are policies governing the release of documents, but I
9 believe sharing relevant findings with the public could foster
10 collaboration to address these issues and the issue with the
11 state funding formula.

12 To better understand the current situation and your
13 plans, I have several questions. You don't need to write them.
14 They're in your email.

15 The SBA and new construction -- I understand that we
16 were required. The old school at Spencer cost too much. And
17 those kids do deserve a great place to go to school. Nobody is
18 ever saying anything about that. But what factors led to
19 approving a design that -- given the declining enrollment that
20 we continue to talk about?

21 From the July 31st meeting, it said a capacity of 613
22 students. And per this impact statement, there's 299 currently
23 there. Again, I'm not as smart as you, but that's less than 50
24 percent. Why would we build a school with less than 50 percent

1 utilization? I don't understand.

2 I mean, it should be a pretty simple question. You
3 can actually take the CFP, the school building proposal, and
4 this impact statement, and put them beside each other, and see
5 how your projections don't line up at all. I'll get to that in
6 a minute.

7 As an assistant superintendent during the middle
8 school project, what was your role in the decision making
9 process?

10 How were the state's expectations balanced with local
11 needs?

12 The reported goal is to save 1.5 million annually.
13 Who set this target? Because I don't think it was you.

14 Are there clear guidelines on the guardrails of this
15 target?

16 What steps are you taking to address the funding
17 challenges differently from the previous approaches based on
18 your review of the district's finances? Which I'm sure you've
19 done.

20 What factors contributed to the current situation?
21 You should know this. If you do not know this, you do not
22 deserve to be here.

23 State board expectations --

24 (Applause.)

1 GABE BOGGS: What are the state's board exceptions? If
2 they are deciding this, why aren't they here? Why -- why are
3 we putting on this facade of this -- all these procedures if
4 we're just going to do what they say?

5 Greater transparency on these points would help me
6 and other community members understand the challenges and
7 support solutions that you come up with for our children's
8 education. I'd appreciate the opportunity to review any
9 relevant public documents or discuss these matters further,
10 perhaps through a community meeting or a written response.

11 Thank you for considering this request.

12 Again, that was over a month ago.

13 Hey, real quick, I want to point out the things that
14 I didn't get to last night. A few points that -- just to
15 abbreviate my notes.

16 (One-minute timer.)

17 The 700 -- this is the most unprofessional thing I've
18 ever seen. How can you literally allow that? How can you ask
19 her to do that?

20 No offense to you.

21 It's all under your direction, superintendent. But
22 we've got a button from a board game and you're closing my kids
23 schools.

24 (Applause.)

1 GABE BOGGS: It makes no sense.

2 The \$700 toilet is so important, it's mentioned four
3 times in the impact statement?

4 Some quotes from last night. We're handcuffed by the
5 state. It will be the parents' responsibility for figuring out
6 bus stops. The transportation issue is hopeless, is what was
7 said last night.

8 My last point, talking about this cohort survival.
9 Linear extrapolation based on historic data -- is based on
10 historic data only. We went through COVID. You're using
11 numbers of a COVID time to project downfalls in enrollment.
12 Obviously, those kids are in homeschool. We're not idiots.
13 Just answer some questions.

14 (Timer ringing.)

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. OTA: Thank you. Up next to speak was Terri Myers,
17 but she has now decided not to speak today. So next will be
18 Kevin Hall, followed by D.J.

19 KEVIN HALL: First question is about validation. Can you
20 correct me if I'm -- can you correct me, please? The purpose
21 of the impact statement is to outline the effect the proposed
22 closing or consolidation will have on the affected communities
23 and their students. Assuming my understanding is correct and
24 it is not a document on how consolidation will be supported or

1 executed, then I would first request that you conclude there
2 are material issues in the impact statement, and you revise the
3 proposal according to what you have heard and learned in these
4 hearings and hopefully understood on your own and conduct
5 another hearing.

6 Let me point out a few examples, if you need more.
7 First, please just read the Geary community section impact. It
8 shows an utter disregard, lack of care, and a complete
9 misunderstanding of the real impacts to the people in these
10 affected areas.

11 (Applause.)

12 KEVIN HALL: And please do not defer this to heart or
13 sentimental requests. Focus purely on the real impact of the
14 daily lives of the kids and the parents that you're impacting.
15 If you need examples, happy to provide those.

16 The transportation section does not correctly
17 articulate the impact.

18 Next question. Can you define the total time from
19 when they leave their door to the time they step foot in the
20 school door? That is the real impact for the kids, not the bus
21 time.

22 There are no birth records or census data to support
23 that Geary kindergarten will decline by 60 percent in one year.

24 The impact is still that there is a deficit. So a

1 few more questions to go through and exercise.

2 What was the total budget of Roane County in each of
3 the last ten years?

4 How many over-formula personnel has Roane County
5 maintained over that same last ten years?

6 If it's similar to the current status, how did it
7 work then and not now?

8 If it's due to a lack of carryover, why was that
9 carryover depleted?

10 A reminder, we are not talking about the cost of the
11 facilities. We're not talking about the low utilization of
12 this facility. We're talking about the cost of the personnel.
13 For relevance, you are indicating a \$1.5 million savings, which
14 is a fraction of the total budget of the county. Let me repeat
15 that. The proposed savings is a fraction of the total budget
16 of Roane County. And you're still assuming a 2.5 to 2.9
17 million dollar deficit.

18 So with the deficit continuing, how do you propose to
19 sustain better education opportunities that you've articulated
20 in the document if the response is just that we are not sure
21 yet, we're trying to save as much as we can, doing everything
22 that we can, then you should omit those statements in your
23 rewrite and list the deficit -- continuing deficits as an
24 impact to this consolidation. If you need more examples, happy

1 to do that.

2 My last question to you is, do you feel it is
3 feasible to operate an efficient and thorough free education
4 system to all the children of Roane County?

5 Why do I ask that? Because under the West Virginia
6 state code and the Constitution, it indicates that the Roane
7 County board, the state board, the West Virginia state
8 legislature shall establish and maintain a system of schools
9 that are thorough and efficient throughout the entire county.

10 My question is, do we feel like the daily lives of
11 these students provides a thorough education? And is the
12 response efficient?

13 Keep in mind, efficient does not mean lowering
14 service --

15 (One-minute timer.)

16 KEVIN HALL: -- and lowering cost. While this may seem
17 ridiculous, I would encourage you to vote no if you feel that
18 you cannot operate an efficient and thorough education system
19 throughout the county, based upon what the West Virginia state
20 legislature has failed to provide - a mechanism allowing you to
21 fulfil your obligation - and that the West Virginia State Board
22 of Education has failed to provide oversight and systematically
23 failed to detect a deteriorating financial situation and
24 complete lack of any future planning to ensure this could occur

1 in the future.

2 Accepting this impact statement and voting yes
3 indicates that you feel the consolidation provides a thorough
4 and efficient system, and that the impact statement is
5 completely accurate, and a hundred percent articulates and
6 adequately articulates the impact to the communities and
7 students --

8 (Timer ringing.)

9 KEVIN HALL: -- within Roane County.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have D.J., followed by
12 Janetta May.

13 D.J. (A MINOR): My name is D.J., and I've been a student
14 at Geary since preschool; nine years of memories, friendships,
15 and lessons that go way beyond what's written in textbooks.

16 COURT REPORTER: Speak up, please.

17 D.J. (A MINOR): When I first started here, I was tiny. I
18 remember walking down these halls nervous and clutching my
19 backpack that was bigger than me. But I also remember the
20 teachers who smiled and said, You've got this. I remember the
21 friend I made, the laughter on the playground, and the class
22 projects that made me excited to come back the next day.

23 This school isn't just a building to me or to any of
24 us. It's where we've all grown up. It's where we've learned

1 what it means to be kind, to be curious, and to believe in
2 ourselves. If our school closes, we're not just losing a place
3 to learn. We're losing a second home; a place full of
4 memories, community, and belonging. We're losing the teachers
5 who know our names, who believe in us, even on our hard days,
6 who treat us like family.

7 I know there are challenges; maybe money, maybe
8 numbers. But I also know closing the doors won't just solve a
9 problem, it will break a community. And once that's gone, it's
10 gone forever.

11 So I'm asking, please don't give up on us. Don't
12 give up on this school that has shaped so many lives, including
13 mine. Help us find another way. Help us keep this place alive
14 for the next little kid walking down these halls, nervous on
15 their first day but ready to fall in love with learning just
16 like I did.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our last speaker this evening will
19 be Janetta May.

20 JANETTA MAY: Hello. My name is Janetta May, and I live
21 next door. My mom and dad brought us to this farm in 1954 and
22 this was their whole life. There came a time that they needed
23 some of the property for the other school. And my dad hated to
24 sell it, but he said, You know it's for the betterment of our

1 community. And he said, My children, my grandchildren will get
2 to go to school there. We need a new school. We went to a
3 little one-room school. And, anyway, we wound up with a nice
4 school.

5 So then came a time that you all wanted to build a
6 new school. And we didn't really want to sell because this is
7 what my mom and dad was going to leave us. This was our -- my
8 inheritance. But my dad has always said that it's for a good
9 cause. It's for our -- the betterment of our community and our
10 children. And I thoroughly agreed with that.

11 And in my heart, it doesn't have anything to do with
12 property. It has to do with the fact that our children -- this
13 is the center of our community. This end of the county has
14 never really had anything, but we have a beautiful, beautiful
15 school, and you all want to take it away from us.

16 So my thing is, can we not come up with a better way?
17 Can we not come up with a way to save our school? You know,
18 you all took away from us and what you're doing now is taking
19 away from our community and our children -- the future of our
20 children.

21 (Applause.)

22 JANETTA MAY: And all those kids -- my great-granddaughter
23 has to ride the bus all the way into town. And I have seen
24 from the time -- like when all the poles and all the lights and

1 everything was put up here, you know, they came in and they did
2 all this stuff and put these big old lights up. And these
3 lights would come on at dawn -- or at dusk, and they'd stay on
4 all night long. My brother said, You know, I wonder who's
5 going to pay the electric bill for those lights.

6 (Applause.)

7 JANETTA MAY: And this went on for a good while. So there
8 was so much money wasted. Look at the fence. Look at -- look
9 at everything up through here. All this was wasted but not
10 really was it going to benefit our children. And you know
11 what? Now you all are taking it away from us.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. MACE: Okay. Ms. Stellato, that concludes the public
14 participation portion of the hearing. Would your team like a
15 recess to gather the questions and respond? Twenty minutes?

16 Okay. We're going to recess for 20 minutes. Give
17 Ms. Stellato and her administration time to collect the
18 questions and make their response. We are at 7:18. We will
19 back by 7:38.

20 (A break was taken.)

21 MR. MACE: Okay. Sorry for longer delay. We wanted to
22 give Ms. Stellato and her staff an opportunity to get their
23 presentation together. So we will call our meeting back to
24 order. I have 7:47.

1 Ms. Stellato, we will turn this section over to you.
2 Thank you.

3 MS. STELLATO: Okay. A little bit about kind of what's
4 happening up here. I gave a little overview last night so
5 everyone is clear. While each speaker was speaking, we did our
6 best to capture the questions that were being recorded. Each
7 member of the leadership team has had kind of the
8 responsibility in trying to help with that and -- and kind of
9 facilitate that. So we've asked for -- for some clarification
10 for some folks that we missed a few things and, hopefully, we
11 have that.

12 I want to first start by saying that there is
13 absolutely nothing that I could say that's going to suffice as
14 an answer for the question -- for -- for the -- the reasons and
15 the rationale behind why we're doing this. I acknowledge that
16 fully. I acknowledge that my staff has worked as hard as I
17 could ever have asked them to work. I think the staff as Geary
18 knows most of these folks, and they know how hard that they
19 have worked.

20 And we are human. And that doesn't mean that we
21 don't make mistakes and that we need to be held accountable for
22 them. I'm not saying that. But I -- I just -- I would be
23 remiss to go without saying that the people sitting before you
24 have tried their hardest. With that being said, we will be

1 acknowledging a few things.

2 Let's start with -- there were several questions
3 tonight specifically pointed -- we're supposed to stay within
4 the confines of -- of the book and the proposal of
5 consolidation. And as I said last night in our previous
6 hearing, the way that the book is -- is -- it's presented to us
7 as a template. Right? And it's a template a --it's a
8 document. And it fails miserably with the questions that are
9 asked for us to adequately represent the actual impact to the
10 lives of the children and the staff member and the community.

11 However, I think we have discussed and we realize
12 that, by us trying to remove as much emotion as possible, and
13 to also write the document as such that this hasn't been
14 decided - because that is the truth; it hasn't been decided -
15 that we probably failed you miserably - and I'll own that - in
16 that we could have done a better justice of the community
17 sections of the document. I think that when you -- when you
18 try to be vanilla in a -- in a very messy world, it shows. And
19 so that's -- that's what's come through. So we own that, and
20 we accept that that's an area that we could have done better.

21 There's a lot of questions tonight about my role as
22 assistant superintendent, my role currently as the
23 superintendent. And so I just want to speak just a tiny bit on
24 that. Because if you haven't been following along every board

1 meeting, you may not know this. I, as a speaker last night,
2 referenced I do feel called to be here at this time. I feel
3 like that when the board hired me to be the assistant
4 superintendent in 2023, I believe -- is that accurate? Two
5 years ago? Two years -- well, this would be the third year
6 back. I do believe that they knew at that time that Roane
7 County needed a continuity plan.

8 I don't think that there was ever an understanding
9 that I would now be sitting in this seat. But at least I had
10 developed a relationship with some of the folks here and could
11 remotely offer a continuity plan in the leadership role of this
12 office. I was not here as part of the planning for the
13 construction that happened, nor was I here during the time that
14 the bond was passed. However, it is my responsibility to own
15 those -- those -- the ramifications of decisions that were made
16 before me and to move the district forward. And so that is
17 kind of why -- that's why we're sitting here, and that's what
18 we're doing.

19 I want to also say that someone said tonight do you
20 understand -- do you truly understand the heart of this. I
21 don't. I don't. But I can -- as close as I can get is I'm
22 going to tell you that personally my dad was a high school
23 dropout. My dad dropped out when he was going to be forced to
24 ride the bus into town. He dropped out in the eighth grade and

1 never returned. My mom is also a high school dropout. So I'm
2 a first-generation college student, and I understand the power
3 of education.

4 I was the kid that my sister school closed the year
5 before I went to kindergarten. I was the five-year-old who did
6 ride the bus for an hour one way. So while I don't understand
7 it today because I'm not living that, I do have experience, and
8 I do understand the magnitude of what this is going to do to
9 families and -- and the community.

10 I also want to just pause for a second and commend
11 the children. I would be remiss to say -- I don't think I ever
12 spoke in front of a group at that age. And all of the children
13 - R., S., E., M., and D. -- I hope I captured them all. You
14 were impressive and you're a testament of your families that
15 you come from --

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. STELLATO: -- and the teachers that love you. And
18 that -- that is -- that's -- that's a special -- special talent
19 that's being cultivated in those children.

20 This community is clearly volunteer strong. That is
21 evident to my -- and people love -- love it here. And there is
22 just no way that we can begin to adequately capture that. I'm
23 going to start with some easier questions that are just point
24 blank, I just need to get them off the list here.

1 There is absolutely -- unless they have done
2 something without me knowing it, there is absolutely zero talk
3 of or confirmation of an official mascot that would be used if
4 the consolidation project goes through. Okay? So I just want
5 to clear that up right now. Did we have staff members who say,
6 hey, what if we did this, what if we did that? Absolutely,
7 because people are thinking forward so there are
8 recommendations being put through.

9 Okay. A little bit more about the why. I mentioned
10 this last night. If you are not aware - and I hope that you
11 are - we have almost failed to make payroll twice in the last -
12 I don't know - maybe six months. I can't remember exactly at
13 this point. But I know for a fact that the people that work
14 for Roane County schools deserve -- deserve to be paid. And --
15 and your tax dollars deserve to be managed appropriately. I
16 know we cannot ask for a third advance in payroll. And I felt
17 like that was important because the question of why and -- and
18 what's driving this came up repeatedly.

19 We're going to get some of the specific questions in
20 a minute. But an important thing is that when the -- when
21 the -- the project was constructed, there was a point in time
22 that we froze the data. Right? And that date was selected as
23 August 23rd. So at any -- while it was mentioned this evening
24 that it is a moving target, absolutely it's a moving target.

1 We recognize that it was invalid probably a day past the day
2 that we froze the data. And so, as we continue to move forward
3 with this, it's very important that we not be -- we have to
4 adjust for it. But because of the process and the way that the
5 laws are required for us to move forward with the -- the
6 document as constructed, the data had to be frozen at a point
7 in time. And that day was August 23rd.

8 There was some comments tonight about are we
9 adjusting for additional cuts. Because of the fact that the
10 data is moving - right - we're comparing, and we've already
11 lost -- I mean, Geary just this week dropped below the critical
12 point of 183 students. I think they're down to 181, I believe,
13 was the number that was shared this morning. This school is
14 at 181. And that's a critical point that it doesn't even
15 require as having a principal as a full-time employee, you
16 know. But that -- that's where we're getting in terms of
17 critical numbers of enrollment here in this building.

18 Okay. So I'm going to let -- get a couple other ones
19 out of the way.

20 Ms. Cottrell, would you like to address Spencer
21 Elementary and some of the --

22 MS. COTTRELL: Okay. I'm Lori. Oh, I've got a loud
23 voice. Okay. I'm Lori Hamric Cottrell, and I'm the principal
24 at Spencer Elementary. So I am going to address the questions

1 about our facility.

2 Yes, Spencer Elementary has close to 500 students
3 this year and the question was about the congestion. So some
4 of the things that we're doing right now to help with the
5 congestion is we have a daily car rider bus. And this is for
6 anybody who is normally a pick-up whose parents don't want to
7 come onto the facility to pick up the kid -- their kids, then
8 the children can ride a bus. And we drop them -- we go to the
9 parking plaza at Dollar General, and the parents meet us there.

10 And it has worked out really well. We have about 30
11 students who take advantage of that. That has reduced the
12 number of people who come onto the facility to pick up children
13 from about 130 to about a hundred. We have about a hundred
14 pick-ups daily.

15 And then, while I am not the one who decides busing
16 situations at our school, I would advocate for next year, if
17 the consolidation goes through, that perhaps we add a second
18 bus and maybe make that pick-up bus be on this side of Spencer
19 so that it would be more feasible for this area to be able to
20 pick up their children without having to go all the way into
21 town. So I would advocate for that for those students from
22 this area.

23 Currently, we have events at Spencer Elementary that
24 are very similar to the events that are here. We have

1 Thanksgiving dinners where we invite our parents and our
2 grandparents to come in and have those. We have Grandparents
3 Day. We have all -- you know, many of the similar events that
4 you have while we do stagger those events. So that's one way
5 that we help with the congestion.

6 For example, we will have Thanksgiving dinner for all
7 of our families to come and join Thanksgiving dinner with their
8 students, but we have two grade levels per day. So we do it
9 like, for example, preschool and second grade are coming on
10 Tuesday of Thanksgiving week. First and third are coming on
11 Wednesday. You get the drift. So that everybody has an
12 opportunity to come. It just is on different days of the week
13 instead of it being celebrated one big day. Those are the
14 concessions that we have to make at Spencer Elementary to
15 accommodate so that all parents do have the opportunity to
16 visit our school and we don't overextend the facility.

17 We do love our students at Spencer Elementary. And
18 while we do have close to 500 students, I think if you gave me
19 a quiz on every kids' name on the building, I would know those
20 kids, and I know their parents. I grew up here. Geary was my
21 very first job. I worked with Linda Ferrar (phonetic), and I
22 say all the time she's -- she's who taught me how to be a
23 teacher is Linda Ferrar. So --

24 And I was the principal at Reedy. While I was not

1 the principal during the time that it closed, I was there.

2 I -- and I've worked at Walton as a substitute but prior to
3 having a full-time job. So I do know that -- the kids of this
4 community, and I work really hard at being one of -- of them
5 and knowing their parents. And we do call. We have -- our
6 teachers do texts in the middle of the day and tell the -- tell
7 parents that Johnny has an earache. And, you know, I held them
8 on my lap until the parents get there. We -- we will take good
9 care of the kids -- any kid that comes to us, we will take good
10 care of them. And I will do my very best should the
11 consolidation go through.

12 MS. STELLATO: Special ed.

13 MS. MONK: Hi. I'm Sarabeth Monk, and I'm the coordinator
14 of special education. Policy 2419 is what dictates the ratio,
15 the teachers to students. So there's really no give in that.
16 So right now, the current numbers indicate that there would be
17 no reduction in special education teachers or classrooms. I
18 don't know if you have followed the current board meetings, but
19 we've actually had to add on teachers at some of the schools.

20 So special education is -- it's very hard because our
21 numbers are based on IEPs, what is written in those. The
22 ratios. So it's hard to give a projection of that. But as of
23 right now, there would be no reductions. And, if anything, we
24 might have to add on in the future based upon those IEPs.

1 MS. ASH: As far as the question about the ABA, we did
2 actually bring in Dr. Ball, a leader in the field. He spent
3 many days in each building across the county giving strategies,
4 classroom management, lots of different ideas and curriculum to
5 those teachers. And this just happened last year and the year
6 before. So I hope that they're utilizing those things in the
7 classroom. So if you have any more questions, definitely reach
8 out to me. I'm Michelle Ash. I'm the director of student
9 services, which is the director of special education and
10 attendance. So if you have any questions on that, be sure to
11 reach out to me.

12 MS. STELLATO: (Inaudible) our efforts to address
13 student's mental health?

14 MS. ASH: Absolutely. So that leads into my mental -- to
15 the mental health question, which was also a really great
16 question. Currently, we are working very diligently with the
17 mental health crisis that our country and our county are
18 currently facing right at this moment. So we are trying to
19 bring in -- we're working very hard to bring in lots of
20 entities within our community, including Ohio Valley -- not
21 Ohio Valley. It's OVP, KVC, Westbrook -- we're bringing those
22 services into our buildings at this point through MOUs.
23 Hopefully, that's going to lead to fewer absences for children
24 to have to leave the school day to receive their therapy or

1 their mental health services.

2 So we've got things coming down the -- the pipes and
3 already in place there. But mental health is a huge concern of
4 ours. If this consolidation would happen, we will still
5 utilize the amazing counselors that we have in our schools.
6 They are to spend 80 percent of their time with the students,
7 and 20 percent of their time is supposed to be spent on behalf
8 of the students.

9 So they do spend every waking minute and after
10 hours - I was on the phone yesterday with one of them - working
11 very hard to ensure that our children are safe, that their
12 families are safe. So I appreciate their efforts, and that
13 will continue.

14 We also have policy that drives, through house bills
15 and senate bills, trainings that have to be provided within the
16 school day. Those will continue throughout any closure or
17 nonclosure of schools. So those policies are mandated, and we
18 will follow that through.

19 I think I answered all your questions on that. But,
20 again, be sure, you can reach out to me at any time. But we do
21 have the mental health concerns of our children very close to
22 our heart as well as the special education needs.

23 MR. GARNER: I'm Jerry Garner, director of operations for
24 Roane County schools. I'm over the transportation part and the

1 facilities part. I'm going to flip off the lights for that far
2 wall. I figured I'd display it on the television behind us.
3 You wouldn't be able to see it. So, hopefully, I can make it
4 big enough on the wall that you can.

5 All right. So this is a map of the most southern
6 part of this area. You can see the Cut Off Road right above
7 the doors there. It's highlighted yellow. It's kind of hard
8 to make the colors out. But if you see a blue line, that is
9 what we're going to keep and drive next year if there's
10 consolidation. If you see a yellow line, we're driving it this
11 year, but we're not going to be able to drive it next year.
12 And that's under two miles away. If you see a red line, that's
13 over two miles away from the bus stop.

14 So as people have mentioned -- and the board already
15 knows because when we started talking about in this August, I
16 gave them numbers -- yes, there's going to be over a hundred
17 kids that we're not going to go past their house. And
18 roughly 30 of those are going to live more than two miles.

19 Now, I know a lot of you were there last night at
20 Walton, but I've been doing transportation 16 complete years.
21 I'm on year 17. When I took over, we had 43 buses. And over
22 time, due to losing students, I was asked to make cuts. We're
23 down to 28 buses. And I cut five buses going into this school
24 year. And that's the reason why people that live very close to

1 this school on Amma Road, even though it may take us five
2 minutes to get home, but they'd have to go on a long trip to
3 get them.

4 So on cut off, we're not -- if this consolidation
5 plan there's not enough time for a bus to run up Cut Off. We
6 are going to start on Route 36 at Cut Off, but not go up it.
7 We will go on Uler Road -- Uler Drive, Uler Road just as we are
8 right now. But we're not going to be able to travel
9 Blowntimber. We're not going to be able to go up Hollywood.
10 We're not going to be able to go up Trace.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So how are the kids going to get home?

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: How are the kids supposed to get home?

13 MR. GARNER: All right. So in my previous 16 years, I
14 could run the buses past your house. The issue right now under
15 consolidation is -- and somebody mentioned it earlier about me
16 talking last night that I'm handcuffed. I got to get
17 everything done within an hour. That's where the issue is.

18 The -- the policy that we have to follow
19 under 6204, 6200, and policy 4336, the transportation policy,
20 says if you consolidate, the buses have to -- for the
21 elementary, the youngest ones have to be done within an hour.
22 So --

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Pre-K to fifth grade is 30 minutes.
24 Middle School is 45. High school is one hour.

1 MR. MACE: Please let the administration address the
2 hearing.

3 MR. GARNER: All right. Recommendation -- under
4 policy 4336, our recommendation is 30 minutes. It's always
5 been 30 minutes for the last 17 years. Middle school kids, 15
6 more minutes. High school kids, another 15. The state
7 department policy 4336 or you can also look in policy 6200
8 and 6204 says that I have a 15-minute variance. Anything over
9 that, we have to ask for a waiver. In the document, we're
10 going to have to ask for waivers for the additional 15 minutes.

11 Most of you have stated tonight it's going to take
12 approximately 35 minutes from this building to get into town.
13 I know that. So that only basically gives me 20 to 25 minutes
14 to travel some roads around here. And I can't go very far. So
15 those who know bus 32, Gary Harold (phonetic), starts at Smith
16 Road in Uler and starts coming in this way. He will not have
17 time to run Blowntimber. If they live on Blowntimber, they
18 have to come out. Same thing for Hollywood and Trace. They
19 will have to come out and meet the bus. There is just
20 physically not enough time to run these side roads.

21 Another area in the Geary area that we can look at --
22 all right. As mentioned earlier, the article that was read
23 aloud that was in the paper, Spice Ridge is as far as we're
24 going to be able to go on Grannies Creek. We are not going to

1 be able to go all the way up to Grannies Creek to the upper
2 part where like Glory Road is. We're not going to be able to
3 go up there. We're going to have to start at Spice Ridge and
4 come out. The only part we're going to be able to drive on Big
5 Sandy Road is from Grannies Creek to Route 36. So if you live
6 on Big Sandy, you're going to have to make a choice. Either
7 you're going to have to come to where the mouth of Grannies
8 Creek is, or you're going to have to go out the other side to
9 Amma Road. We're not being able to run a bus like we are this
10 year on Big Sandy.

11 Pigeon. Pigeon is also on the other side of Spice
12 Ridge. Comes out on the other side. Spice Ridge meets Pigeon
13 on Big Pigeon. That's where we turn the bus around this year
14 and in previous years. We're not going to be able to go all
15 the way up there to where Spice Ridge and Pigeon meet. We're
16 only going to be able to go up far enough where Little Pigeon
17 and Big Pigeon meet.

18 We're not going to be able to travel Little Pigeon.
19 We're going to take the point where the two roads meet and
20 start the bus there. That's where that bus route will start.
21 It will come out of Pigeon, go onto Amma Road, pick up the
22 students on Amma Road, and then come into town. That's all
23 there's time to do.

24 We have another bus, bus one, that starts at the

1 Rolling Hills Church there on Thorofare Road. We're going to
2 be able to continue that bus. It will go up Little Left Hand
3 Road. Pick up students on Little Left Hand. It used to come
4 out and be able to turn left to go towards Vineyard Ridge.
5 That little portion on Vineyard Ridge from Little Left Hand
6 Road up to Payne Ridge we're not going to be able to run. We
7 do not have enough time to do that. So when that bus hits
8 Vineyard Ridge, it has to head towards Route 36 to come into
9 town.

10 All right. As I mentioned earlier, we're not going
11 to be able to travel Hollywood. Hollywood connects Uler and
12 Tariff. Tariff Road -- we'll run Tariff but we're not going to
13 be able to turn right onto Hollywood. Those parents that live
14 on that side of Hollywood will have to bring their students out
15 to Tariff Road.

16 Right now, the bus runs out Maple Run to pick up a
17 few students. We're not going to be able to go out Maple Run.

18 We're continuing to making the loop around. We will
19 briefly go up Canoe to Simmons Fork Road as far as we can go up
20 Canoe. We have parents and students that live past there going
21 up Canoe. You can see the yellow line, and then there's a red
22 line at the upper part of Canoe that we're not going to be able
23 to hit.

24 Come back out of Canoe, and then take Tariff Road

1 over to Linden and come out on Linden.

2 We're also -- this year, we're able to run Looney
3 Fork. Looney Fork will not be run next year. Students that
4 live on Looney Fork will have to come out to Route 36.

5 None of these are ideal. Nobody wants to do this.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Then don't.

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Don't.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Then don't.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't want --

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: All you have to do is say no.

11 MR. GARNER: This --

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: All you have to do is --

13 MR. GARNER: This --

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: We will get behind you all and we will
15 help raise the money it takes to run the school. I know people
16 that I can get to back you up if you all have the guts to tell
17 them no.

18 MR. MACE: Please let the administration address the
19 hearing.

20 MR. GARNER: The question was asked, how did you come up
21 with the times. I'm just simply making that answer.

22 All right. The question was asked -- unrealistic
23 times. Each driver has to turn in their routes to me. This is
24 the current route. Bus 49, as it was mentioned earlier today,

1 it does Grannies Creek. It does go over to Hollywood. It does
2 go up Trace Road to pick up a student if they ride. I've
3 blocked out the student's name. I don't want to give out
4 information. And I'm not going to give their exact address.

5 You can see the driver's write down times. I look to
6 see how long things take and how long the drive time is. You
7 can see 90 minutes for high school kids that are in 12th grade
8 that live on Hollywood. That's how long they're on the bus.
9 So we know these times. But, again, I can't make that happen
10 next year if I'm only allowed to use 60 minutes.

11 So nothing was made up. I just want to make sure you
12 understand that. Due diligence was done on creating routes to
13 get as many kids into town as possible. Some of the roads that
14 have fewer students on, we simply just don't have enough time
15 to go up them and back out.

16 One more thing that I have at my disposal and that --
17 let me see if I can make this bigger. It's not coming in very
18 well. But this is GPS that we have on the buses. It gives me
19 how fast they're going, where they're located, their GPS
20 coordinates. So this is just another piece of information that
21 I can use to see how long that bus is on the road and how long
22 it's going to take.

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So if the consolidation does not happen,
24 will the routes stay the same that they are today?

1 MR. GARNER: Just a reminder, we started with 43 routes.
2 We would still have 43 routes unless I was directed to make
3 cuts. We currently have 28 routes. If I'm not directed to
4 make any more route changes, then those 28 routes will stay
5 intact if we don't consolidate.

6 Now, there was one more thing that you didn't see up
7 here. Orville Stripman (phonetic) is one of my drivers. He
8 drives the Tariff side and goes up to the Hollywood side on
9 Tariff. Does Maple Run and stuff. Well, bus 16 I'm taking out
10 of picture next year because we have another problem that's
11 been mentioned tonight. We've got to take care of our special
12 needs students.

13 How I'm able to do it now is, we have a bus pull in,
14 drops off the regular students, and then that bus takes right
15 back off. Those special needs students don't live too far away
16 from the school. So that bus picks up an aide, goes out, and
17 comes back for those special needs students. I will not have
18 that luxury if we consolidate. So bus 16 we'll use somewhere
19 else because it's a pretty new bus. It has air conditioning.
20 We'll put it somewhere else.

21 But what I'm getting at, I will repurpose what that
22 driver is doing. It doesn't necessarily have to be Orville
23 because, in service personnel, when you've got to post
24 something, people have a right to bid on it. But we are going

1 to have to make a special ed bus run out here. So there will
2 be a special ed bus in the Geary area if we consolidate that
3 will have a bus driver and an aide to take those students into
4 town.

5 All right. Enrollment numbers. There was a question
6 if it was an outlier on the preschool students. If you look at
7 the data in the chart, preschool is based on birth rate. The
8 thing is that I can't determine is if it's an outlier if I
9 don't have birth records that will cover that to tell me what
10 the future birth rate is. So I cannot determine if it's an
11 outlier. I have to use the number as is.

12 Now, could I simply average everything out over the
13 years? I could. It would be maybe valid but I don't think so
14 because we continually lose population. There has to show some
15 type of decline in the numbers. You can do a linear
16 regression, do a line of misfit, plot the data, draw a line
17 through there, and predict where things go. Or you can do the
18 graduation cohort, and take kindergarten one year, put them in
19 first grade. And if we lose five percent a year, then you take
20 five percent off that number, and that's your new starting
21 number. Then second grade, you go diagonally again. This will
22 be your new 2nd graders two years from now. Take five percent
23 off, and that's what you'll get, if we're losing kids at five
24 percent in this area.

1 But when we did the numbers, we looked at the Spencer
2 area and see how many students were declining there. We looked
3 at Walton. Came up with a percentage -- what the percent of
4 people are moving out of the area, and the same thing for
5 Geary, and based trends on that. Yes, the sending kids in
6 preschool devastate Geary down to -- if you only have nine, six
7 of your 54 kids.

8 Same thing was done when we closed down Reedy. We
9 had to project future numbers, and we were way off. We
10 predicted that we would still have so many kids in the county
11 that we don't. So I made sure that we showed some type of
12 decrease based on the trends. We could not include what's
13 going to happen in the future. Based on how many -- you know,
14 Ms. Stellato said we may lose 50 percent here. We may lose 50
15 percent, but that's a feeling. There's no mathematics to that.

16 So that's the reason you don't see a drastic cut for
17 next year. We have no clue how many students we're going to
18 lose. Yes, we'll lose some. But, mathematically, there was no
19 number to put with it.

20 The lights out here on the field was mentioned. They
21 are on a photo eye. Of course there's a breaker box against
22 the road. They can flipped off. The school has total control
23 over that. They can flip them on and off at any time. If they
24 leave them on by accident or something, the photo eye will kick

1 them back off when the sun comes up.

2 That was donated money from the county commission.

3 The fencing that was mentioned earlier was also donated.

4 Spencer Elementary received part of that on the fencing, and so
5 did Geary school. So the black fence along the creek, and the
6 chain link towards the Gray (phonetic) property was all money
7 that the Roane County Commission provided this school and also
8 Spencer Elementary. Also, the county commission did lights
9 here and Spencer Elementary and a little bit at Walton with the
10 money they donated.

11 The county commission gave us \$100,000. And it was
12 basic -- their portion -- they had some COVID money that they
13 allowed us to use outside to make things better so kids could
14 be outside playing or whatever, so they weren't in a classroom
15 stuck together. Where they would have nice fresh air to
16 breathe and make things more enjoyable.

17 And activity bus was mentioned multiple times this
18 evening. We had an activity bus until about March of last
19 year. We were at a board meeting. The state was in there.
20 Finance from the state office, Uriah Cummings, was there and
21 told us basically to cut out any extra spending that you don't
22 need to. He mentioned for us not to go to like
23 (indiscernible).

24 Of course if federal money could pay for it, that was

1 all right. But if it had to come out of county funds to go to
2 a conference, he advised against that or any other expenditures
3 that you could do away with.

4 So I asked Dr. Duncan at that time do you want the
5 activity bus to go away at that same meeting in front of
6 everybody, and he said, Yes. So the very next day, I told Paul
7 Vanoy (phonetic), Sorry. Activity run's over with until we
8 have another funding source.

9 Now, right now in the plans -- and some of you may
10 have seen some postings for an after-school program called
11 SOAR. They also had a summer program. We're going to have
12 buses attached to that. Right now, we're going to have a bus
13 in the Geary area, one in Walton, and one in Spencer. Those
14 buses will leave the school roughly at 5:30 to take students
15 home the best that we can. I won't know the exact routes until
16 I see some data on who the kids are. We may be only able to
17 travel the roads and meet the parents somewhere along the main
18 roads.

19 Next year, if consolidation happens, they still have
20 the grant. They still have the money. So everything would be
21 based for the little kids out of Spencer Elementary School.
22 And I would be sending a bus towards Walton and a bus towards
23 Geary. Nothing in that plan that I know of says that I cannot
24 run that bus past the high school, past the middle school in

1 town to help bring the kids back this way if they need to stay
2 after school for a while.

3 So some practices may be done by 5:30, as I mentioned
4 last night. Probably not football, but maybe basketball,
5 volleyball -- some sports that practices can happen a little
6 bit quicker. Band. If you're in band, maybe they can have
7 band practice and be done by 5:30 where they could catch the
8 bus and head back this way.

9 What would really be nice is, we're talking three
10 buses. The activity run was just one bus. And then we had to
11 loop it around. If we have both Walton and Geary families on
12 that bus, we went down 119, dropped off at Walton and then cut
13 across either the interstate or Amma Road to come back and drop
14 the Geary students off on this side before it went back on
15 Route 36 to drop any kids that would happen to live on Route 36
16 between the school and town.

17 It was mentioned earlier that this building was used
18 for the Red Cross center. Yes, it was. We have agreements in
19 our -- in all of our schools, if necessary, if there's a
20 disaster, that Red Cross can come in.

21 When we had the flood in this area, Woody Wilson
22 (phonetic) called me because he knew the best direct line was
23 get ahold of me. And I told Woody, I'll see you at the school
24 to open this place up. So -- and that's the way it happens.

1 People know who to call and get things done, and immediately
2 there was no issue. Whatever resources Woody Wilson needed
3 with the American Red Cross, he got.

4 The \$700 on the toilet was mentioned. Somebody said
5 it was in the plan four different times. At Roane County High
6 School, there used to be a daycare center. And I said this
7 last night, and I know a lot of you weren't there. But when
8 Roane County High was built, there was a daycare center in case
9 students had a child that needed watched during the day, the
10 facility was already there so they could continue their
11 education.

12 Then eventually that was phased out. The daycare
13 center was phased out, but everything is still there. There is
14 a sewing room. There used to be home economics in the same
15 wing. So one of the home economics rooms had a washer and
16 drier and running water already there for us to tap into. The
17 one thing that it didn't have in there was an ADA compliant
18 toilet for the little kids. So that's what we're going to have
19 to do. And for roughly \$700, my men putting in their labor --
20 but as far as the cost of the toilet, the piping and stuff that
21 hit the sewer line that's already nearby, that was the
22 estimate; \$700 to get it done.

23 All right. Other costs that were mentioned. The
24 rebranding of the schools. Well, that decision honestly hasn't

1 been made yet.

2 I was part of Walton High School when it merged with
3 Spencer. Okay. Spencer High and Walton High, I was a teacher
4 there and I was on the school improvement council for Walton.
5 We met -- and Dennis Carpenter (phonetic) was my principal at
6 that time. We met multiple times to come up with a mascot.
7 Other things were thrown out. Many names were mentioned. And,
8 finally, the group approved the Roane County Raiders. They
9 really didn't want to pick anything that was green and white.
10 They didn't want to pick anything that was blue and yellow.
11 They wanted something totally off.

12 So nothing has been decided at all. Those local
13 school improvement councils have not got together to make any
14 type of decision like that because that's in the future. And
15 the same thing happens -- I know some of you are worried about
16 (indiscernible) transfer and all of those things that come
17 along with consolidation. Those are just tasks that are down
18 the road that will happen in the future.

19 All right. We're talking about 30 students that live
20 over two miles. I mentioned that earlier. Mr. Mace reminded
21 me of (indiscernible). We will pay the parent to bring their
22 kids out to meet the bus. Right now, that rate is \$1.60. It's
23 been \$1.60 for a long, long time. It will be up to the board.

24 I'll make a recommendation, give it to Ms. Stellato.

1 She can run it past the board, and they can vote do we need to
2 increase that number to more than \$1.60. The gas prices, as
3 you know, have went up and down over the years. So it may be
4 something that we want to tie in to a couple of times a year.
5 I do fuel bids for transportation. We pick July 1st
6 at 2:00 p.m. to do the -- Harris Oil is the only one that's
7 ever bid on it. But we take what they have, and they're low
8 bid, so they get the fuel bid for the entire year.

9 We could do something similar. We could look at
10 local gas stations, we could look at the one here, we could
11 look at the three or so that are in Spencer and do an average
12 or pick the lowest one, whatever the board wanted to do, to set
13 -- do you want to make it \$3? Like gas right now is like
14 2.999. Round to the nearest penny and make it \$3. That would
15 be up to the board.

16 And pay those 30 parents of those kids -- if a kid
17 has -- like three kids, each one of those kids would get like
18 \$3 a day. So that would be \$9 for that family bringing them
19 out. I just want to make sure you understand it's per kid, not
20 per family. Whatever the board decides to set as that rate.

21 MS. TANNER: Okay. So I want to speak to personnel.
22 Whenever we get to personnel season, the personnel will be
23 based on student enrollment. And right now, that's not set
24 because our enrollment keeps fluctuating. So we will wait

1 closer to that time to determine the personnel that we need for
2 next school year.

3 Ms. Mace asked about the faculty senate. That's West
4 Virginia Code 18A-4-8f is what you have to follow. So that
5 states that if there is a closure or consolidation that you
6 would -- everyone in faculty senate takes a vote. And then it
7 is looked at the majority. So what did the majority choose.
8 So that is in the state law. That's not something that we're
9 able to change. So that would be -- the faculty center would
10 to that and then service personnel would also do that. And
11 then those votes go to the superintendent.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Individual persons, right?

13 MS. TANNER: Everyone.

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Everyone can.

15 MS. TANNER: Everyone votes. And then you look at the
16 school and you take the majority. And then that majority is
17 sent in to the superintendent.

18 And then for -- someone had asked about advanced
19 academic opportunities. They are planning -- and I'll let
20 Ms. Hunt and Ms. Claypool speak to that. But the plan is to
21 offer like algebra one to the -- to the kids and other
22 academics for these children whenever they go there. I'm not
23 sure who that question was, but I'll let Ms. Claypool and
24 Ms. Hunt speak to that directly.

1 JENNIFER HUNT: First, my name is Jennifer Hunt, I'm the
2 principal at Roane County High School. I taught at Geary -
3 second grade - for 11 years. I taught at Walton for 11 years
4 in first grade. And was an administrator at Walton before
5 moving to the high school.

6 I have a vested interest -- someone asked about --
7 and I was going to do this in conjunction -- about, you know,
8 is there a plan to merge our students together. I have a
9 vested interest in merging all of our students together
10 because, in the long run, they're going to all be coming
11 together and be Raiders at some point.

12 Very early on in my position at the high school, I
13 have already asked if I could plan events for, you know, our
14 upcoming eighth graders that are going to be coming to the high
15 school as freshman. I've asked if I could, you know, host
16 middle school events because I do want them to be able to
17 interact as much as possible, to become familiar with each
18 other, because, you know, they are going to become a group of
19 students together once they hit their freshman year at the high
20 school.

21 So one of the opportunities that I have approached
22 the board office with is to offer a CTE course through my ag
23 teachers. We've discussed that and would like to offer intro
24 to agriculture one to the eighth graders that are going to be

1 at Spencer Middle School next year, whether that be one school
2 or three. I think, you know, when we're offering -- giving our
3 kids extra opportunities to be able to, you know, start their
4 vision on what they want to do with their life, it would be a
5 great time for those kids to decide, hey, I like this kind of
6 program. I want to stick with it, you know. Give them a
7 little vision. If they want to move on to the Roane Jackson
8 Technical Center when they're juniors or seniors. Or they can
9 continue on their CTE path at the high school with -- with my
10 staff and I. So, you know, that is a vision that I do have.
11 We're hoping to be able to make that happen.

12 Some other activities and ideas that I had that I've
13 asked if I was able to just kind of run with are -- there's a
14 play being offered. I've already talked to the administrators
15 of the other middle schools. There is a play that's going to
16 be put on by our arts and humanities at Roane County High
17 School in November. And so I've asked if I could have the
18 eighth graders that day.

19 My vision on that is that those kids would ride the
20 bus to the high school. They would spend the day with us at
21 the high school. They would watch the play. And then we would
22 provide them some other activities for the rest of the
23 afternoon. They would have lunch with us. And then, you know,
24 we would give -- provide some kind of activity for them for the

1 afternoon to, you know, get them some high school exposure,
2 some exposure to the teachers and -- you know, and to each
3 other.

4 Another idea -- some other ideas I have is to offer
5 some evening events. I just recently found out that I have a
6 blow-up movie screen in my building. I had no clue. Learned
7 about that last week.

8 So, you know, I've already started making plans to
9 offer like movie nights in the evenings, not just for my
10 students but why would we not offer a middle school night, you
11 know, to bring the middle schools together, you know, to watch
12 a movie or, you know, to have popcorn.

13 I'm really hoping that we get to host a playoff game
14 for football season this year. I've already mentioned to -- I
15 believe it was Ms. Tanner that I would like to be able to host
16 a middle school tailgate for something like that to bring all
17 of our students together, you know.

18 Transitioning our students -- your students is part
19 of the key process for where they're going to land in high
20 school, you know. I want to be able to help them now to learn
21 how to do high school, because it is very different.

22 You know, explaining to them, getting them to
23 understand the difference between , you know, passing and
24 failing a class in middle school is very different in high

1 school. Because in middle school, you don't have to earn
2 credits. You just have to have the GPA and enough passage to
3 be able to go on to the next grade.

4 You know, at the high school level, if you fail a
5 class, you know, for the semester, you're already off target
6 for on-time graduation. And then we have to work with
7 counseling for credit recovery and that kind of thing. So, you
8 know, transitioning those students is key in helping them get
9 through that path. And why not start now is what I'm thinking.

10 So, you know, I've been on the other end of that as,
11 you know, an administrator in a middle school where, you know,
12 we're getting questions from the high school, why are they not
13 prepared for, you know, how to do high school? Well, I'm there
14 now, and I want to be able to help prepare them.

15 And so that is, you know, a vision that I have. I'm
16 ready to take off running, as much as I can run, with something
17 like that. But I do have a vested interest in -- in all of the
18 students in Roane County. And, you know, hope I can do my part
19 to make any transition they have smooth.

20 Do you have anything to add?

21 MS. CLAYPOOL: I know Lea mentioned -- she asked -- one of
22 her questions was how we thought to merge the three middle
23 schools. And we've thought about this.

24 I'm Annette Claypool. I've been here at Geary. I

1 started my teaching career here at Geary. Eleven years, I was
2 here. I left and went to Spencer Elementary. Then I came back
3 to Geary and was principal at Geary. And then I left Geary and
4 went to Spencer Middle School. So like they say, once a
5 Panther, always a Panther. I'm with you.

6 But with this, she asked that question. And that's a
7 good question to ask because it's going to be to be a
8 transition for all of them. And one of the things that I
9 thought about was creating a transition team that includes
10 parents, staff, students from all the schools that are going to
11 be there. Even the students need to have a say.

12 We're going to look at -- we're going to look at a
13 shared vision with all of our people, all of the kids. We want
14 everyone's input. It's not just going to be Spencer Middle
15 School anymore. It's the three if this happens.

16 Talked about student leadership. Getting all the
17 students involved. And I think that we need to highlight every
18 school's strengths, every school's success, and every school's
19 traditions and keep them alive because every school as
20 different traditions and different strengths and different
21 successes. And that's something that we need to really focus
22 on so that everybody feels that they are a part of it.

23 MS. STELLATO: Ms. Hardman, we're going to switch to you
24 to answer finance. If you want to un-mute, Amy is going to

1 amplify your answers.

2 MS. HARDMAN: Hi. Can you hear me? Are you able to hear
3 me?

4 MS. STELLATO: Yes, ma'am.

5 MS. HARDMAN: Okay. So I'd like to say hello to everyone.
6 I am sorry that I cannot be at your hearing, but I had some
7 training sessions. And the answers that I put together, I put
8 together really quickly.

9 I have some answers for Kevin Hall. He asked the
10 question about what was the total budget for each of the last
11 ten years, and how many people over the budget did we have for
12 the last ten years. I only have -- I'm only able to access
13 information for the last eight years. So I will give you the
14 information that I have for that.

15 For the 2017-2018 year, we had -- we were over in our
16 personnel from what the state formula provides, 8.91 personnel.
17 In 2018-2019, we were over 15.41. In 2019-2020, we were
18 over 16.37. And that is when we started receiving the COVID
19 money, the ESSER funds. So we were able to fund a few more
20 people using those funds. That access didn't come from our
21 general fund.

22 For 2020 and 2021 -- for school year FY 2021, we were
23 over 14.57. For school year FY 2022, we were over 35.97. For
24 FY '23, we were over 20.25 personnel. For FY '24, we were over

1 a total of 6.81. That year was kind of an anomaly. I feel
2 like that has to do with salaries being switched to some
3 federal programs. In FY '25, we were over 16.12. And this
4 year currently, we are over a total of 11.07.

5 Now, understand that those overages are a snapshot in
6 time. Those are based on our certified data in October. So
7 any time that we added anyone later on in the year -- if we had
8 to add, say, a special ed person because -- or add another
9 teacher because we got enough students to add another
10 classroom, those are not included in these numbers. This is a
11 snapshot in October which was the beginning of the year.

12 Also, this doesn't include -- we had a year when we
13 totally exhausted our federal special ed funds and salaries
14 that we were over in that project had we moved back to fund 11,
15 to our general fund, this does not reflect that. So I just
16 wanted to make those points.

17 He also asked what was our total budget for each of
18 the last ten years. So for 2018, our total budget was 26.4
19 million. Our general fund was 18.9 million. For 2019, our
20 total budget was 27.3 million, and our general fund was 19.3
21 million. So that was an increase. For 2020, when we started
22 receiving ESSER funds, our general -- our total budget was 39
23 million, and our -- we still had an increase in our general
24 fund budget. It went to 19.7. In 2021, our total budget

1 was 40.6 million, and our general fund declined to 19.2.

2 In 2022, we started receiving SBA funds for the
3 construction of the new Spencer Middle School, and our total
4 budget went to 57.7 million. Our general fund declined to 18.8
5 million. In FY '23, our total budget was 56.8 million, and our
6 general fund budget again declined to 18.3 million. In FY '24,
7 our total budget was 46.5 million. And we had an anomaly that
8 year. Our state aid increased because of an increase in
9 students, and our general fund budget increased 279,000 to 18.5
10 million. In FY '25, our total budget was 30 million. And our
11 general fund budget again declined to 17.5 million. And for
12 FY '26, so far our total budget is that 25.4 million, and our
13 general fund budget is 16.6 million.

14 Our general fund budget that I'm quoting to you is
15 made up of state aid and our local taxes. And our state aid,
16 as I will remind you, is mainly driven by student enrollment.
17 So since school year 2018, our -- our general fund has
18 decreased -- our budget has decreased a total of 2.3 million.
19 That's how much we've lost from year -- from year 2018, that's
20 how much we lost. Even with our taxes increasing, our state
21 aid has still decreased enough based on student enrollment that
22 we decreased 2.3 million. And that was the only financial
23 question that I remember hearing.

24 I would also like to say that it is heartbreaking to

1 hear your stories. And, again, none of us wants to close these
2 schools. And I -- I can appreciate everything that I've heard
3 this evening.

4 MS. STELLATO: And can you hear me?

5 MS. HARDMAN: I can, but it's kind of muffled.

6 MS. STELLATO: There was a question about factors that
7 contributed to the deficit.

8 MS. HARDMAN: Loss of enrollment is a big one. When we
9 constructed Spencer Middle School and did the things like the
10 turf on the field, it ate into our reserves. And then we just
11 came out in a deficit. We had too many people. We had too
12 many employees for the state aid that we were getting. And we
13 had some overspending on Spencer Middle School. And,
14 ultimately, those things led to our deficit.

15 MS. STELLATO: Thank you, ma'am.

16 Okay. A few more that I have. I'm going to speak
17 for myself on this one. At no time have I felt coerced,
18 forced, or intimidated into doing this. I do believe that,
19 yes, we did -- we shared the state board's impact -- or the
20 state board's statement to us in the two times that we have
21 visited there. I think we shared the first one. The message
22 is clear, but at no time have I been intimidated, coerced, or
23 forced into making this. And I only speak for myself in that
24 situation.

1 We have -- we -- I definitely would agree that the
2 board has, from -- from what I have heard shared in
3 professional development and things like that, we have heard
4 that the board has been reminded that -- of their fiduciary
5 duties in this role.

6 What's my approach to tackling the finances right
7 now? The folks sitting before you know that there's not a
8 penny that we're spending that we're not having at least five
9 people verify. Five is a bit facetious, but multiple people
10 verifying what the expense is, and is it a valid expense, and
11 who has looked at the schedule to confirm that we need to have
12 that teacher.

13 And I have called in every resource I can find for
14 technical assistance from the department. We actually are
15 getting ready to engage in a special education audit just to
16 make sure that we haven't missed anything. We're also --
17 each -- each school has been tasked with setting targets for
18 themselves in terms of reducing energy costs. And we just --
19 you know, we do pay attention to what the community says and we
20 discovered that there was a set of lights on that we had -- had
21 to address.

22 So we are doing our best to mitigate spending. And
23 mitigate financial implications from the little things that we
24 can control because the personnel costs are fixed until we go

1 through the personnel season. And that's part of 18A, that --
2 the rules that we have to follow in management of our personnel
3 and our workforce.

4 What's the state board's expectations? I don't want
5 to speak for them but all of the things that they've shared
6 with us have been recorded publicly. But because of what was
7 documented in the -- in the state of emergency impact
8 statement -- or the state of emergency summary that was
9 provided to us, they are expecting us to put forward a closure
10 and consolidation plan.

11 They are expecting us to address building
12 utilization. They are expecting us to address the deficit and
13 the fact that we don't have a fund -- a positive fund balance.
14 And they are expecting us to refine our budgeting procedures.
15 And as the team that sits before you would agree, we have
16 definitely upped the budgeting and monitoring processes that
17 the district uses to manage our funds on a regular basis.

18 Is the purpose of the impact statement to outline the
19 consolidation? Yes.

20 Why was the carryover depleted I believe is the
21 question. As Ms. Hardman just addressed, when you carry
22 over -- carry personnel and expenses beyond what your state aid
23 formula will cover, including choices that were made -- any --
24 any employee that is beyond a 200-day contract, it comes out of

1 the local share. Things like that. Deciding to add extra aids
2 or services to students when that student needs something
3 that's over and above. And again, as somebody said before, the
4 state aid formula is a frozen in time point. So anything that
5 we add beyond that, we are carrying that until we get to the
6 next point in time where we get to adjust the state aid formula
7 and the moneys that we received.

8 Sorry. I'm looking for -- there's a question here in
9 here about the ethics of rebranding. Do I think it's ethical
10 to spend money on rebranding? We don't have money to spend on
11 rebranding, but it's the right thing to do. And so, therefore,
12 if that's the direction that we go, then this team will commit
13 to figuring out a way that we can do that and we can do that
14 well.

15 Any other -- (inaudible) that anybody has identified?

16 Do we feel it's feasible to operate thorough and
17 efficient schools? We have the duty to operate thorough and
18 efficient schools. As someone mentioned before, I did have the
19 ability to live in Monongalia County, which is one of the
20 top-performing school districts in the state of West Virginia.
21 And when you work in that environment and you live in that
22 environment, you see how things could be. You see them as
23 otherwise. And that is the -- that is what I try every day
24 when I talk to these folks before you to instill that vision

1 that we have the same children in this county, and our children
2 deserve the same opportunities that my kids got in Monongalia
3 schools. My kids had accelerated math from the third grade up.
4 And that was a decision that we made for them as a family.

5 Currently, we do not accelerate our students. This
6 year, we do not accelerate our students in mathematics until
7 they get to high school. And -- and I'm sorry, but that is --
8 that is a way that we need to improve here. We need to be able
9 to recognize exceptionalities on both ends of the spectrum.
10 Currently, we cannot do that. We cannot offer the accelerated
11 courses and the gifted programs or things like that that we
12 have students in our midst - and the teachers sitting over
13 there know that we do - that deserve opportunities on both ends
14 of the spectrum.

15 And I believe, Mr. Mace, that's -- that's it.

16 MR. MACE: Okay. That would conclude the special meeting
17 and the hearing for the Geary Elementary-Middle School. I
18 would entertain a motion to adjourn until our next special
19 meeting -- board meeting. That will be Wednesday, October
20 the 29th, 2025, 5:00 p.m., at Spencer
21 Elementary School. The next regular board meeting is on
22 Thursday, November the 6th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Roane County
23 High School.

24 Need a motion, please. Mr. Harper with the motion.

1 Mr. Carpenter with the second. All in favor, say aye. Aye.

2 Those opposed? (No response.) That motion carries, and we are
3 adjourned.

4 Thank you all for coming.

5 (Hearing concluded at 9:00 p.m.)
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE

I, Erin E. Kincaid, RPR, Official Reporter of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, West Virginia, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the proceedings had in re the Special Meeting of the Board of Education of the County of Roane at Geary Elementary-Middle School, on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, as reported by me in machine shorthand.

I hereby certify that the transcript within meets the requirements of the Code of the State of West Virginia, Section 51-7-4, and rules pertaining thereto as promulgated by the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Given under my hand this 13th day of November, 2025.

Erin E. Kincaid

Erin E. Kincaid, RPR
Official Reporter, Fifth Judicial
Circuit, West Virginia

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE

SPECIAL MEETING

SPENCER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025
5:00 PM

APEARANCES:

JEFF MACE, PRESIDENT
JAMES MINNEY, VICE PRESIDENT
EILEEN RICHARDSON, MEMBER
DARIS HARPER, MEMBER
DENNIS CARPENTER, MEMBER
ANN HARDMAN, TREASURER (*Appearing electronically*)
CORRIE OTA, SECRETARY
MICELLE STELLATO, SUPERINTENDENT
LORRA TANNER, DIRECTOR OF STRUCTURAL & PROGRAM PERSONNEL
AMY COLE, DIRECTOR OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS & COMPLIANCE
JERRY GARNER, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
MICHELLE ASH, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
SARABETH MONK, COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION SUPPORT
BRENDA BROWN, COORDINATOR OF TECHNOLOGY
MEGAN STARCHER, PRINCIPAL GEARY ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE
LORI HAMRIC (COTTRELL), PRINCIPAL SPENCER ELEMENTARY
ANNETTE CLAYPOOL, PRINCIPAL SPENCER MIDDLE
JENNIFER HUNT, PRINCIPAL ROANE COUNTY HIGH

Erin E. Kincaid, RPR

I N D E X

SPECIAL MEETING: OCTOBER 29, 2025

STATEMENTS:PAGE

LORI HAMRIC (COTTRELL)

11

DANYLLE POPP

13

JOE WEILAND

14

DENISE HOLLIDAY

18

CORENA DOLAN

21

CHAD PERKINS

24

GABE BOGGS

28

RICK ATKINSON

31

JUSTIN SHEARS

32

KEVIN HALL

36

RACHEL STEPP

39

1 MR. MACE: Good evening. And welcome, everyone, to a
2 special meeting of the Roane County Board of Education. The
3 purpose of this meeting is to conduct a public hearing for the
4 purpose of closure of Geary and Walton Elementary-Middle
5 Schools, and the consolidation of their grades K through five
6 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades six through eight
7 into Spencer Middle School, and the consolidation of pre-K
8 students from all schools into the space now occupied by the
9 Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School.

10 We are present at the Spencer Elementary School
11 cafeteria. All board members are present, and we do have
12 quorum.

13 I will now read the hearing statement. This public
14 hearing is called to order. My name is Jeff Mace, president of
15 the board -- Roane County Board of Education.

16 This hearing is convened in accordance with the terms
17 of West Virginia Code 18-5-13a and State's board of education
18 Policy 6204 in connection with the proposed closure of Geary
19 and Walton Elementary-Middle Schools, and the consolidation of
20 their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades six
21 through eight into Spencer Middle School, and the consolidation
22 of pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied
23 by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High
24 School.

1 The statute and the state board policy provide that
2 members of the public, one, have the right to be present; two,
3 have the right to submit statements and testimony; and, three,
4 have the right to question school officials.

5 Members of the public in the order of sign-in will be
6 allowed to make statements, offer testimony, ask questions of
7 school officials. A total of 11 members of the public have
8 indicated that they desire to submit statements or testimony or
9 to question school officials. In order to give every speaker a
10 fair opportunity to submit statements, testimony, and to
11 question school officials, five minutes have been allotted for
12 each registered speaker. The responses of school officials to
13 questions shall not be included in the time allotted.

14 No member of the public may present more than once.
15 No member of the public may grant time to another presenter.
16 Corrie Ota has been designated as the timekeeper and will
17 advise when one minute is remaining for each presentation and
18 when time has expired. It is not necessary to consume the
19 total amount of time allotted.

20 As stated in the public notice of this hearing,
21 written statements and materials that were submitted to the
22 superintendent before October 24, 2025, will be given full
23 consideration. That deadline has passed, and written material
24 may not be submitted during this hearing. All questions shall

1 be -- initially be directed to the superintendent. The
2 superintendent may elect to respond to the questions or may
3 delegate another school official to respond to that question.

4 At the conclusion of all presentations by members of
5 the public, the superintendent or another member of the
6 administration will be given the opportunity to respond to any
7 information that has been presented by members of the public.
8 Apart from questions directed to the superintendent and
9 answered by the superintendent or another member of the
10 administration, there will be no direct debate or dialogue
11 between members of the public and board members or members of
12 the public and school officials.

13 Action on the proposed closure of Geary and Walton
14 Elementary-Middle Schools, and the consolidation of their
15 grades from K through five into Spencer Elementary, and their
16 grades six through eight into Spencer Middle School, and the
17 consolidation of pre-K students from all schools into the space
18 now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane
19 County High School will be subject of a board of education
20 meeting scheduled for November the 6th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. At
21 that time, the board will conduct all deliberations in open
22 session and a vote will be taken in open session following the
23 board's deliberation.

24 And that completes the hearing statement.

1 Okay. Ms. Stellato, are you ready for your proposed
2 summary?

3 MS. STELLATO: Yes. Good evening. Good evening, members
4 of the board of education, staff, parents, students, and
5 members of the Roane County community. Thank you for joining
6 us tonight for this important public hearing regarding the
7 proposed closure of Walton Elementary-Middle School and Geary
8 Elementary-Middle School.

9 As required by West Virginia Code 18-5-13a and
10 18-5-13, West Virginia policies 6200 and 6204, this hearing and
11 the construction of the required impact statement provides an
12 opportunity to present the rationale for the proposed changes;
13 to share the data and planning that informed this proposal;
14 and, most importantly, to listen to the concerns, ideas, and
15 perspectives of the community.

16 On a personal and professional level, none of the
17 members of the leadership team, nor the members of the board of
18 education sitting before you this evening wish to be engaged in
19 this process. However, we've been charged to lead the district
20 through this most difficult time; and, therefore, must
21 undertake this work. We understand the magnitude of the
22 decisions that will be made in the coming weeks and do not take
23 that responsibility lightly.

24 The purpose of tonight's hearing is not to finalize

1 any decision but to ensure that all stakeholders understand and
2 engage with why this consolidation is being considered; how it
3 would affect students, and staff, and families; and what
4 opportunities and challenges this proposal presents for the
5 future of all of Roane County schools.

6 Over the past several years, Roane County schools has
7 faced a combination of challenges that are increasingly common
8 in rural West Virginia communities: Declining student
9 enrollment and community population; rising operational and
10 maintenance costs; difficulty attracting and retaining
11 certified staff across multiple small campuses; the need to
12 provide equitable access to academic programs, extracurricular
13 activities, and student supports across all of our communities;
14 a declining - and a declining and now negative fund balance
15 that is needed to effectively operate our school system.

16 Additionally, the state -- the state board of West
17 Virginia declared a state of emergency in Roane County schools
18 in July of 2025, citing failure to approve a closure and
19 consolidation plan, budgeting deficiencies, building
20 utilization well below the average, and a \$2.5 million deficit
21 that has now been reduced to 1.5 million but expected to climb
22 between 500,000 and a million more this school year. That's
23 largely in part due to personnel overages from last year's
24 personnel season and the required addition of special education

1 staff and ratio staff that have been added and required for
2 this year.

3 Despite all of these hurdles, our goal is to ensure
4 that every child in Roane County, regardless of where they
5 live, have access to a safe, effective, and academically-strong
6 learning environment.

7 As stated before -- as stated before, the proposal
8 under consideration would close Walton Elementary-Middle School
9 and Geary Elementary-Middle School at the conclusion of
10 the 25-26 school year, consolidate both of their populations
11 into Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle; and create an early
12 childhood center in the student support area at Roane County
13 High School. It would ensure that transportation routes,
14 staffing, and support services are planned carefully to
15 minimize the disruption and preserve community connections as
16 much as possible. And it reduces the fiscal deficit by
17 approximately \$1.4 million annually.

18 This proposal is guided by the following priorities.
19 Educational quality. An improvement to the educational quality
20 for all students offer a broader curriculum, specialized
21 teachers, and enhanced curricular opportunities; equity for all
22 students regardless of home community as all students deserve
23 access to comparable resources and facilities.

24 Fiscal responsibility. Consolidation would reduce

1 duplicative costs in administration, utilities, and facility
2 maintenance, freeing funds for classroom instruction and
3 student supports.

4 Long-term stability -- sustainability. A
5 consolidated facility positions Roane County schools for a
6 stable enrollment and improved efficiency for decades to come.

7 By now, I hope you've had the chance to thoroughly
8 review the impact statement and supporting data compiled by the
9 leadership team that sits before you. The document was
10 arranged with specific sections addressing enrollment,
11 facilities, finance, personnel, student transportation,
12 educational programs, and the community. Tonight, we invite
13 you to ask questions about the construction of the plan and the
14 future impacts of its implementation.

15 We recognize that schools are not only educational
16 institutions but anchors of the community for a sense of
17 identity and pride. We approach this process with respect,
18 transparency, and a commitment to an open dialogue. The voices
19 of Walton and Geary families, staff, and community members are
20 essential to shaping the final decision of Roane County
21 schools' collective path forward.

22 Following tonight's hearing, all public comments will
23 be recorded and considered by the Roane County Board of
24 Education. The board will review data, public input, and

1 recommendations before making the final decision on November
2 the 6th at the regular board meeting.

3 Should the closure of consolidation move forward, a
4 transition plan will be developed by the leadership team and
5 will work collaboratively with staff, parents, and community
6 representatives. Change, especially when it involves schools
7 that have served generations, is never easy. But as stewards
8 of our children's education, we must plan not for today but the
9 next 20 or 30 years. Our mission remains clear; to provide
10 every student in Roane County with the best possible education
11 in safe, supportive, and forward-looking environments.

12 Thank you for your time. Thank you for coming. Your
13 participation tonight is appreciated, and continue the
14 commitment -- and your continued commitment to the children of
15 Roane County.

16 MR. MACE: Okay. Ms. Ota.

17 MS. OTA: Public participation and attendance are welcomed
18 and encouraged. Speakers are asked to express themselves in a
19 civil manner with due respect for the dignity and privacy of
20 others who may be affected by your comments. While it is not
21 our intent to stifle public comment, speakers should be aware
22 that if your statements violate the rights of others under the
23 law of the defamation or invasion of privacy, you may be held
24 legally responsible. If you are unsure of the legal

1 ramifications of what you're about to say, we urge you to
2 consult first with your legal advisor.

3 As Mr. Mace has already stated, we have 11 people who
4 have signed up for -- to speak tonight; therefore, each person
5 will have five minutes. As your time runs down, I will let you
6 know that you have one minute left by making this sound
7 (one-minute timer).

8 Okay. Our first speaker this evening is Lori
9 Cottrell, followed by Danylle Popp.

10 LORI HAMRIC (COTTRELL): Good evening, board members,
11 county office staff, fellow principals, our wonderful Spencer
12 Elementary staff, and our Roane County families and community
13 members. Your commitment to our Roane County community is
14 evident by your attendance here tonight.

15 I am Lori Hamric Cottrell, and I consider myself a
16 blessed lady to be the principal of 494 amazing and precious
17 students who attend Spencer Elementary, and 62 incredible and
18 dedicated staff members who inspire me every day.

19 When the possibility of -- while the possibility of
20 consolidation is heavy on all of our hearts, we feel the pain
21 for our Geary and Walton colleagues, and we worry about all
22 Roane County students who will be affected. This decision will
23 have a lasting effect on all of us.

24 Spencer Elementary is a large school, but we are

1 family. We get to know every child the minute they walk
2 through our front doors. We know their names, where they live,
3 what bus they ride Monday through Thursday, and who's going to
4 pick them up on Friday, if it's Dad's mom or Mom's mom or an
5 aunt or an uncle. We give the high fives, and we dry the
6 tears, and we take time to listen to the stories of all of our
7 students. We love our students, and our students love us.

8 Spencer Elementary prides itself with providing our
9 students with a well-rounded education and professional
10 learning opportunities for our teachers. We look at students'
11 strengths and weaknesses and interests as our teachers and our
12 classroom aides design lessons and activities that engage them
13 in -- in -- in learning experiences.

14 Fiscal inequality in our county has had a negative
15 impact on our school from time to time. Spencer Elementary
16 strides every day to stand by the words that we wrote in our
17 school's mission statement when we revisited it -- when we
18 revisited it a couple of years ago. Spencer Elementary's
19 mission is to foster a safe and creative environment that
20 allows all students to grow their potential by developing their
21 social, emotional, physical, and cognitive wellbeing,
22 cultivating lifelong learners. We commit ourselves to building
23 meaningful relationships with the families we serve and the
24 community that we represent.

1 While the future is uncertain and our hearts are
2 hurting for each other, I am confident in our school's ability
3 to love and educate all students who enter our doors.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. MACE: Thank you. Just a moment until we bring the
6 speakers back on. Just a moment. We have a technical issue
7 with the speakers. So just give us a moment on recess.

8 (A recess was taken at 5:15 p.m.)

9 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Danylle Popp,
10 followed by Joe Weiland.

11 DANYLLE POPP: Good evening. My name is Danylle Popp.
12 I'm a preschool teacher here at Spencer Elementary and also the
13 faculty senate president.

14 I want to start by saying that I am saddened that
15 Walton and Geary schools are faced with the possibility of
16 having their schools closed and having their school families
17 dismantled. I am also saddened that our own Spencer Elementary
18 School family will be broken apart as many of our teachers and
19 staff may not make the cut and return here next year, or will
20 be moved to other buildings.

21 We all love our schools deeply. But love and heart
22 unfortunately do not pay the bills. If it did, we would never
23 be faced with these challenges. However, due to financial
24 irresponsibilities from the last few years, we are now faced

1 with these possibilities. It's unfortunate that we are all in
2 the same situation that we are in. But because of the strong
3 feelings and high emotions that have come with this process,
4 some comments have been made, perhaps not intentionally, but
5 insinuated that Spencer Elementary is not a good enough school,
6 or that we don't care enough for our students because there are
7 too many, or our students can't learn because our classrooms
8 are too full.

9 Our staff strives every day to teach all our
10 students, show love and compassion regardless of where they
11 come from, and to be their biggest cheerleaders. We have
12 climbed a mountain the last three years academically and
13 behaviorally to help our students to achieve success, and we
14 will continue to do so with any staff, students, and parents we
15 might possibly gain in the future.

16 Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our next speaker is Joe Weiland,
19 followed by Denise Holliday.

20 JOE WEILAND: Good evening. I think this is night three.
21 How are you all tonight? My thing is we need to find a way to
22 fix the problem. We need to go back and roll our sleeves up
23 and get something done. What about if you cut drivers ed? Art
24 programs? Maybe just for a year or two. But once you -- if

1 you cut these two schools, it's for a lifetime. There's no
2 backing up. I'm not for cutting art. I'm not for -- driver
3 ed. But is there programs that we can cut for a year or two
4 instead of these little kids?

5 Did anybody -- any one of you ask our house delegate
6 member to be here, one of our state senators, or even the
7 governor? Why aren't they here? They could have been invited.
8 And even the mayor, Terry Williams, has got a good way of
9 finding money when it's not out there. Good person to ask.

10 And, you know, what's wrong with our economy is
11 housing. I'm in the rental business. I get calls every day
12 from people begging for anything. There's a lack of housing in
13 this state. That should be at the legislature.

14 You know, when I was in the eighth grade, half our
15 kids quit (indiscernible). Probably a third if they did not
16 want to ride the bus out here. I rode this bus out here
17 for four years. I can tell you what it's like. But half of
18 them quit because they didn't want that ride. But I had a
19 teacher my eighth grade year, Danny Harper. He convinced me to
20 try out for football. He made a big difference. He made a lot
21 of difference in my life for the good. And Danny sat up there
22 at one time, and Danny only done what was best for the kids.
23 Really a good fellow. But he talked me going to football.

24 But there's not a place out this road I've not walked

1 either way from just riding this. You talk about nighttime
2 after a ball game trying to catch a ride, you're not going to
3 do it. You walk. So I know what that's like.

4 And that bus -- I can still smell the smell of eggs
5 when somebody throws up. One kid gets sick, they all get sick.
6 Eggs (indiscernible) eggs now. Don't cook them around me from
7 that bus ride. No thank you. Don't want to forget it.

8 You know, that's going to affect the kids from
9 Spencer a lot because these kids here are going to be tired.
10 The kids who have to spend extra time are going to be sleepy.
11 They're not going to have their homework done. They'll be on
12 the bus. It's not fair to the kids here either.

13 If somebody asked me to have -- tell me to send the
14 kids to Spencer, I wouldn't ask for that either. I don't have
15 no grandkids in this school. I don't have no kids in this
16 county. But your all kids matter to me. Every kid in the
17 county matters to me. And it's wrong to ask kids to ride the
18 bus that far.

19 And the little boy with me last night, four
20 generations, he's the first one that's going to school. He's
21 got a half brother. None of him. Home schooled. That was his
22 grandpa with me last night. I remember him kicking and
23 squalling. Would not get on the bus. Never went to school in
24 his life. Wasn't made.

1 But you close Geary and Walton, they're going to
2 homeschool them kid like that. In other words, no education.
3 Out on a bicycle or a trampoline, that's what you're going to
4 get. No. I cannot take it. I see this homeschooling
5 personally. I've never seen any good come out of it. And they
6 get paid pretty good money for it. That's part of the problem
7 for them. It's wrong. These kids should be evaluated for that
8 homeschooling. You should have to pass a test at the end of
9 the year, but they don't. Nothing.

10 There's a lady out there that's got eight grandkids.
11 And I say big enough to ride a bicycle and play on a trampoline
12 all day. You never see them with a book. I mean, it's going
13 to hurt these kids.

14 I remember when my daughter was in school here. I
15 would drive like a mad man out here to get to work to let her
16 sleep 30 minutes more. People are still probably mad at me
17 down 119 the way I'd drive down through trying to get to work
18 to give her 30 more minutes of sleep. You don't realize what
19 that ride is until you ride it.

20 But you all can go back and roll up your sleeves. I
21 mean, when things get tough, you got to get tough sometimes.
22 You all can find a solution besides cutting the schools down.
23 And I want to thank you. I know you all have heard a lot in
24 the last three nights and I thank you for your patience.

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. MACE: Ms. Stellato, I think we've lost the speakers.
3 It's become difficult to hear. Can you turn it up again Lori
4 here? Then when we talk up here --

5 MS. COTTRELL: Yeah.

6 MS. OTA: Thank you.

7 MS. COTTRELL: Yeah.

8 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Denise Holliday,
9 followed by Corena Dolan.

10 DENISE HOLLIDAY: Hello. My name is Denise Holliday. I'm
11 a first grade teacher here at Spencer Elementary School. I'm
12 here to represent our school, that we love and -- as much as
13 anybody else loves their school and our students. And I want
14 to also talk about last night's hearing. It was very moving,
15 and it was very impressive. The speakers spoke from their
16 hearts, and it was very moving.

17 One of the speakers said that he has attended a lot
18 of hearings, and not one of them started without saying the
19 Pledge of Allegiance and the Lord's Prayer. So at this time, I
20 would like for everybody to stand and say the Pledge of
21 Allegiance.

22 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

23 (The Lord's Prayer.)

24 DENISE HOLLIDAY: I couldn't think of a better way to

1 start what I have to say.

2 We're going through some tough times. And ten years
3 ago, we may never have thought of this, although we did lose
4 Reedy. And when we got Reedy kids, we accepted them just like
5 they were our own, and they adapted very well.

6 So a few things that I want to talk about is, our
7 Spencer Elementary School, Spencer Middle School, we are as
8 much concerned about what's going on with the kids, the bus
9 rides, the transitions as anybody else. And we wish, just like
10 everybody else, that this wasn't a decision that had to be
11 made. But as educators, we teach our kids that you have to
12 face reality with courage and wisdom.

13 And this is reality. Nobody chose. I know there's a
14 lot of controversy about this money thing, but the fact is that
15 this didn't happen in isolation. Nobody seems to be speaking
16 about the legislature's role in this crisis that we're in.
17 There's an attack on public education, and everybody that is
18 affected by this consolidation or school closures need to come
19 together and visit our state legislatures and ask for change.
20 Because without this change, we're not the only school
21 districts that is going to be facing this crisis. The rest
22 will come.

23 We're losing enrollment, not only because of people
24 moving, but we have the Hope Scholarship that nobody seems to

1 be talking about, and it's siphoning away our students. I'm
2 for school choice, but I'm not for taking your kids out of
3 school because they're uncomfortable in a public education and
4 not giving them an education at home. So we have a lot bigger
5 crisis than school closures and consolidation.

6 One of the biggest crises we face right now is our
7 West Virginia children being educated. Now, at this school, we
8 have had three years of professional development -- intense
9 professional development because we were an improvement school.
10 A lot of that is because of leadership.

11 We -- Michelle Stellato came to our school in 2021, I
12 believe, and she was a breath of fresh air. We had somebody
13 that believed in us and trusted in us and allowed us to follow
14 our professional training. And she told me one time -- because
15 I was always felt like I had to hide what I was doing because
16 it wasn't from the textbook. And I'd had it for my lesson --
17 in my lesson plans because we had some administrators that were
18 directly from the textbook.

19 And she --

20 (One-minute timer.)

21 DENISE HOLLIDAY: -- looked at me one day, and she said,
22 I'm glad to see that you have Christmas lesson plans in your
23 lesson plans. And I said, I don't have those in my lesson
24 plans. And she said, Oh, I thought that was you. And I

1 admitted that, yes, I do do things like that, but I don't put
2 it in my lesson plans because I have to follow the textbook.
3 And she said, Denise, as long as you're following the standard
4 and I'm seeing progress, I will support you 100 percent. And
5 it was like a burden was lifted from me, and I was allowed to
6 teach the way I was taught to teach.

7 So when people try to say Michelle Stellato does not
8 care, you are deeply, deeply misguided, because she does care.
9 She is a Christian. And she looks to the Lord for advice and
10 guidance. And these times right now, the reason that we're in
11 these times is because of finances. It's not because
12 Michelle --

13 (Timer ringing.)

14 DENISE HOLLIDAY: -- wants to close any of the schools
15 down. It's because of our finances. And, unfortunately, it
16 looks like consolidation and school closures is going to be the
17 answer to this problem.

18 Thank you very much.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Corena Dolan, followed
21 by Chad Perkins.

22 CORENA DOLAN: Good evening. My name is Corena Dolan.
23 I'm a second grade teacher at Spencer Elementary. I'm blessed
24 to teach little people and watch them grow in so many ways.

1 Being a teacher is being so much more than preparing lessons
2 and teaching the students before us in our classrooms.

3 We are teachers but we are also nurses, counselors,
4 peacemakers, a listening ear to those little and big voices
5 when no one else is listening. We are cheerleaders. We are
6 comforters. We are a safe place. We feed them when they are
7 hungry, even after school hours and on the weekends. We foster
8 a loving, warm, safe place during uncertain times. We give
9 them choice, a voice of their own, and an equal chance to be
10 successful.

11 My first teaching position was at Reedy Elementary.
12 I began my teaching career at that school knowing -- knowing it
13 was about to close and consolidate with Spencer Elementary and
14 Spencer Middle School. I understand a lot of the frustration
15 and questions that many have expressed with the consolidation
16 of schools. It is difficult for everyone.

17 I was placed on the riff list with no promise of a
18 job. I was fortunate enough to transfer into a position at
19 Walton Elementary-Middle School where I worked for two years.
20 I truly loves WEMS and so grateful for the time that I had
21 there. I then transferred to Spencer Elementary where I
22 currently call home.

23 Our school shares the same aspirations for our
24 students as shared by the other schools. Our staff knows our

1 students by name, sharing many aspects of their lives, attend
2 activities they are involved in, check in with families, and so
3 much more. If the consolidation happens and students come to
4 our school, your children will be loved, cared for, made to
5 feel safe, encouraged to be the best they can be, and be
6 afforded the same opportunities. Love and the care of others
7 regardless of where they come from in this county.

8 I have heard so many comments during the past board
9 meetings and public hearings. But I would like to share two of
10 those that stood out. One was said, We are all family in Roane
11 County. Another said, We need to unite and become one. I'm
12 sure I'm not the only one in saying I totally agree with these
13 statements. I hope we all can reflect on this sentiment to
14 our -- to our students in our actions and our words. They are
15 watching us in these difficult times.

16 This affects everyone. Spencer Elementary School
17 feels the sadness and anxiety of what is happening as well. We
18 have questions and concerns as well. Many of those have
19 already been brought up and addressed.

20 In closing, I want to say that I hope the board
21 considers everything that they have and will hear during these
22 meetings. It takes courage to speak what is in our hearts and
23 often places people outside of their comfort zone.

24 Walton and Geary, our school community is committed

1 to making this transition with you right by your side. Our
2 school has already welcomed teachers as well as students from
3 both of those schools. We do not say those students from Geary
4 or that teacher from Walton. They are part of our family. And
5 we are so excited to have them in our school.

6 I admire the poise and grace that Michelle Stellato
7 has shown as the leader of this county during these difficult
8 times. The job has not been an easy one. Please note that I
9 am praying for everyone who is being impacted by this in this
10 county. Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Chad Perkins, followed
13 by Gabe Boggs.

14 CHAD PERKINS: Good afternoon. Appreciate your all's time
15 and attention. I know that none of us really want to be here,
16 including all of you all. We get that. I just wanted to tell
17 you that we do appreciate it. We appreciate your note taking.
18 We notice when you're looking at us. We notice when you say
19 sincere things back to us. We do appreciate that. And people
20 do notice. So just, you know, whether you're drawing a target
21 on my face, or whether you're taking notes doesn't matter. It
22 appears as though that many of you are -- are giving your time
23 and attention to these folks, including me, and -- and we do
24 appreciate that.

1 And -- and, you know, when we think about people
2 noticing -- I had a good parenting lesson last night. H, our
3 oldest, who is, you know, very serious and pretty well-adjusted
4 and a good kid, you know, made a comment about me being upset
5 after these meetings. And I just felt like such a failure -
6 right - because, you know, I'm not supposed to -- you know,
7 you're supposed to shield your kids from all that stuff.
8 And -- and so, you know, it hit me that even in I'd like to
9 think a pretty stable and safe home, even our kid, who is an
10 excellent kid, is -- is feeling this already.

11 And so, you know, I don't exactly know what point I'm
12 trying to make to you there other than just to publicly admit
13 my failures, which is a tendency I have. But, you know, it
14 is -- it is something that these kids, although we probably
15 don't give them enough credit, are already noticing and are
16 already feeling this from us.

17 So let me tell you a parenting trick I have that --
18 that I'm more proud of, because we also have two rotten boys
19 that are not nearly as well-behaved or as serious as H. And we
20 have this pantry in our house that has everything in it that a
21 little boy would want. And sometimes, you know, I'll notice,
22 hey, there's been a lot of candy eating in -- in the pantry,
23 primarily because the Kit Kat wrappers and stuff are just left
24 on the floor in there.

1 And -- and so, you know, a trick that I have is I
2 won't say anything -- you know, get on them or whatever. But
3 I'll just say kind of in passing, well, wait, you know, I feel
4 like there's been a lot of candy eating in the pantry. Too
5 much candy eating. And I just kind of leave it. And just --
6 just kind of let that simmer. And then without anything else
7 happening, one of them will come to me -- J. or B. will come to
8 me and say, hey, I ain't been eating candy in the pantry.

9 And I tell you that story because, you know, we made
10 an assertion or an opinion last night that perhaps there is --
11 there is influence outside of local control that is suggesting
12 to you all to take a certain course of action. And -- and it
13 just, you know, came to me that -- the story kind of came to me
14 because, you know, we made that assertion, and it's been
15 going -- you know, that -- that opinion is all over the state.

16 And then, all of a sudden, on my way here literally,
17 someone sends me this article and the state superintendent
18 says, hey, we're not telling county boards what to do. And so
19 it kind of came back to me, it's like, hey, I think Ms. Blatt's
20 been eating candy in the pantry. So I -- I don't know.

21 (Applause.)

22 CHAD PERKINS: But -- but what I'll say and what she said.
23 She said a lot of people believe the state board is a state
24 board education-driven decision. And even though the board

1 does approve the final closures and consolidations, these are
2 local county board decisions. It's local board members working
3 with their communities, working with their superintendents and
4 leadership to decide what's best, what's best for the
5 students -- and you can read the rest. You all have probably
6 read the article way before I did.

7 And what I would submit is you can take her at her
8 word, or you can think that that's a disingenuous statement.
9 And it's up for you all to make your own opinion. But -- but
10 to that conspiracy theory or that opinion that may be going
11 around the state and --

12 (One-minute timer.)

13 CHAD PERKINS: -- perhaps I hold it and perhaps I don't, I
14 just wonder and worry if there is a bigger plan to closings and
15 consolidations. Particularly with Roane County High School
16 utilization being so slow, I worry about this school. If we
17 send those boys -- those candy eaters to this school next year,
18 who's to say that they'll make it all the way through this
19 school before this school is closed and consolidated into
20 another school? And so that's -- that's a worry I have that
21 we're -- we're quickly moving back to the recent model, and it
22 may be not a stated goal by the state but it is a goal of the
23 state.

24 So, lastly, I would just say, the only -- the only

1 thing we can do is push back by voting no. If enough small
2 counties reject consolidation plans, the state will be forced
3 to change the aid funding formula and it will delay what I fear
4 is the eventual takeover of local county schools.

5 Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Gabe Boggs, followed
8 by Rick Atkinson.

9 GABE BOGGS: Good evening.

10 Ms. Holliday, thank you. I don't know where you're
11 at, but thank you for -- thank you for your Pledge of
12 Allegiance and Lord's Prayer. That was -- that was awesome.

13 Ms. Hamric Cottrell, if that's how it's said. I
14 don't mean to be offensive. But thank you for having us here.

15 Thank you for speaking, Ms. Starcher. Thank you for
16 speaking last night.

17 All of you teachers, thank you for being here.

18 I want to be very clear that no time any of the
19 things that I've said -- I have zero doubt that all children
20 that come to this school will be taken care of just like they
21 would at any other school. That's the honest truth. The
22 problem is not that.

23 Things are getting taken and spun different
24 directions. And I see that. That's what happens when we have

1 disagreements. But being reasonable -- exercising our rights
2 here by talking to you is what we're entitled in this case.
3 Like Mr. Perkins said, none of us wants to be here, including
4 you. And this is -- this is not my intention to come talk in
5 front of you every day or every meeting until I leave this
6 county. I don't want to do that. But I will because this is
7 important.

8 One quote from last night -- and I'll get to my
9 question that I've been dying to finish asking.

10 Ms. Stellato, you quoted, We failed you miserably --
11 last night. Or you didn't quote it. You said it last night.
12 I'm quoting you from last night. Hopefully, I'm not -- I don't
13 mean to manipulate that. A God's honest leadership advice that
14 I can give you is, when you are in times of success, when your
15 team is doing well, those are "we" moments. When you have
16 catastrophic failure in front of you, those are "I" moments.

17 You have to take ownership. As a retired member of
18 the service and other people here, that is the backbone of
19 making any decision. But when you are in charge of a public
20 entity, we need to know the questions that we're asking.

21 Correct me if I'm wrong. But last night, I heard
22 that -- at the GEMS meeting that we overspent on the
23 construction of the new Spencer Middle School. I think that's
24 something that we all know, but that's the first time it's come

1 up in a hearing. I saw reactions on faces.

2 You also addressed the question, when these gentlemen
3 asked about people trying to persuade the board and make
4 questions, you addressed that, and you said you know that they
5 were reminded of their fiduciary responsibilities. My question
6 is, did those fiduciary responsibilities also apply to the
7 construction of the new Spencer Middle School?

8 If we could understand, especially after we saw it
9 was 56 million that year -- and I know that's extra funds and
10 all these other things. I get that. The SBA inflates that
11 outrageously. I completely understand that. But we would
12 really like know. I don't know that the true answer is a
13 million dollars in furniture and 6,000 -- or \$600,000 in
14 special services. Which there is no question about that.
15 Let's go in debt every day to take care of our children.

16 That brings up another good point. How can we be in
17 debt to a state that's in debt to a country that's in debt?
18 But I know that's ridiculous to ask.

19 Mr. Garner, everyone is asking about the bus routes.
20 And I think one thing that could help you is with your display
21 yesterday. If you talk about those GPS logs and the real
22 drivers' logs is how you calculated the routes, it's based on
23 real data. You didn't just make them up. You didn't Google
24 Maps and add two minutes for each stop. You used realtime

1 data. Explain that to us. Help us understand. We don't
2 necessarily need a resume reading session, to be quite honest.

3 My question --

4 (One-minute timer.)

5 GABE BOGGS: -- do you believe that linear extrapolation
6 is an accurate method to project future enrollments when using
7 source data, trends in enrollment numbers from years that
8 enrollment was known to affected by a nationally -- or known to
9 be affected by three percent by a global pandemic? National
10 three percent drop across the country because of global
11 pandemic.

12 I know this is ridiculous, but you can ask this
13 question in AI. You'll get different variations. I used Grok.
14 And because I can't pronounce a word, I had to change it just a
15 little bit. Linear extrapolation is an indefensible method in
16 this context. It's not just inaccurate. It's predictably
17 misleading. Any credible projection must isolate and adjust
18 for any distortion, particularly in the pandemic era.

19 (Timer ringing.)

20 GABE BOGGS: Your calculations are not correct.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, will be Rick -- Rick Atkinson,
23 followed by Justin Shears.

24 RICK ATKINSON: Good evening. Thank you for the

1 opportunity to -- to speak this evening.

2 First of all, I regret we're having to have these
3 conversations. I am not a proponent of consolidation. My
4 question and concerns may be a little different than others.

5 But what happens to the schools after they're closed?

6 How will buildings be repurposed?

7 Will they be repurposed?

8 How many jobs will be lost in the communities?

9 How are we going to replace those jobs in the
10 communities?

11 We cannot just give away these buildings. We need to
12 maximize dollars if buildings are sold. Remember, these
13 buildings were built in some way, in some form with taxpayer
14 dollars. These are our dollars. All our dollars.

15 Our staple of education also needs to reconsider and
16 to look at helping to repurpose those buildings. Helping those
17 who are in charge of that. And be concerned - and I'm sure
18 they are - with how closure will affect our communities.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Justin Shears,
22 followed by Kevin Hall.

23 JUSTIN SHEARS: Good evening, everybody.

24 Gabe kind of stole my thunder on -- and we actually

1 didn't prepare together. But I wanted to start by just
2 pointing out how many faces up here that had a hand in my
3 education, and how much I appreciate that. And I wanted to do
4 something weird and kind of turn around, not as a sign of
5 disrespect, but to the people out here. And to assure you that
6 I see so many faces in this crowd that I care about and love,
7 including the teachers at these schools.

8 This isn't about you. This isn't us towards you.
9 This is us trying to get our kids a fair and equitable shot at
10 education. Like Gabe said -- he took the words right out of my
11 mouth. I have no doubt that my kids would walk into this
12 school and be loved just as much as any other kid. And I know
13 I speak for almost the entire other end of the county when I
14 say that. And I hope -- I hope you know that. It's never been
15 my intention to insult your ability as an educator or your
16 ability as a community. It's not about that.

17 So I did -- I still do have some tough questions.
18 And I just lost my notes. But I wanted to -- to kind of look
19 at this from a different aspect tonight. And I wanted --
20 there's a lot of parents sitting here. And I wanted to -- I
21 wanted you guys to think back to when your kids were five, six,
22 seven, eight, nine, ten years old.

23 And I want you to think about a day that you were
24 taking a trip. You got your kids up. You got them ready. You

1 got them in the car. And then you went and you traveled to
2 Parkersburg or something like that. Something that's going to
3 take you about an hour and a half. Might sound like a
4 familiar time.

5 And I want you to think about how your kids acted
6 half of those trips in the car. And I want you to think about
7 what their attitude was like when they got there. How many
8 trips did you have to stop and use the bathroom? Mommy, Daddy,
9 I got to pee. That's what we're about to do to these kids. So
10 with that, I'm going to ask a question here in a minute. So
11 just keep that in mind. Keep those trips that you took with
12 your kids in mind -- those long trips.

13 And I just wanted to point out -- I've always got to
14 throw out some numbers. So I did some -- just some rough
15 numbers today. It's a pretty easy numbers to throw together.
16 But with a child from the time leaving their door to -- to get
17 to school -- and I understand the bus rides are only going to
18 be an hour. But there's going to be hundreds of kids that
19 it's going to be an hour and a half at least from the time they
20 leave their door.

21 So a pre-K student, after this consolidation, just in
22 that transit time will spend 315 24-hour days in transit. If
23 you want to think about your workdays, that's 1,260 eight-hour
24 workdays of their lives -- of their childhoods gone. My

1 question for the transportation, I asked it the other night. I
2 haven't had very good luck getting my questions answered with
3 this process. Maybe I haven't communicated them very well.

4 (One minute timer.)

5 JUSTIN SHEARS: My question was, do you feel -- did the
6 intent of the maximum bus ride times is just bus rides? Or is
7 that -- the intent of that is -- is us just cutting bus rides,
8 like cutting routes, so we have to take them in a car to meet
9 the bus? Do you truly feel that meets the intent of these
10 policies when they were made?

11 And, lastly, I would ask all of these people. If you
12 feel that -- you know, hearing some of these things and
13 thinking about if your kids were going through this, can you
14 honestly look us in the face and tell us that you believe that
15 these hundreds of kids -- which I'll tell you, Walton and
16 Geary, we like to isolate them into little pockets. But when
17 you put southern Roane County in together, and especially our
18 high schoolers, we make up 50 percent of the students. And can
19 you honestly tell me that with all this stuff, our -- these
20 children will receive a fair and --

21 (Timer ringing.)

22 RICK ATKINSON: -- equitable education?

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

1 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Kevin Hall, followed
2 by Rachel Stepp.

3 KEVIN HALL: First off, thank you for confirming my
4 understanding last night of the purpose of the impact
5 statement. That was very important. Let me just reread it and
6 what you confirmed last night.

7 The purpose of the impact statement is to outline the
8 impact or effect the proposed school closing or consolidation
9 will have on the affected communities and their students.

10 I believe this document was created under duress. We
11 all know it was an emergency situation. Do not question the
12 level of effort or care or commitment that went into creating
13 that. But I believe it was unrealistic expectations set by the
14 state for such a critical, critical issue that we're talking
15 about today.

16 So as an example, Mr. Garner, I do not question your
17 ability whatsoever to create a great plan for transportation.
18 But the transportation section does not show impact. That
19 is -- let me make that clear. That's what I'm trying to
20 articulate. The transportation section is a plan for how you
21 are going to address consolidation, not showcasing the impact
22 to the students.

23 As an example - just talked about it - what is the
24 time from when the kid walks out the door of their house to the

1 time they walk in the school? You can call it the pee factor.
2 The bladder effect, right? How long do they have to hold that?
3 That's what we're talking about. That's what should be --
4 that's the impact to the students, right? That's what needs to
5 be in that document. That's just one example that I'm talking
6 about in this document.

7 Why keep harping on this? Folks, this -- this is our
8 only presentation to state officials, who, quite frankly, I
9 don't know care, and I believe they want consolidation. You
10 are creating a document that is our only face -- our only
11 presentation to the state officials to articulate the impact to
12 these students and the families.

13 So as I asked last time, I'm not asking for
14 sentimental effect or heart effect. True data; true time for
15 them to go from school to home. So, again, as I mentioned last
16 night, based upon the severe material issues contained in the
17 document that everyone should realize now, your only option is
18 to revise the document and -- under the processes in the
19 policies that you already have in place and redo the hearings.

20 Let me rephrase the question from last night. Do you
21 believe that the state enables you to operate and maintain an
22 efficient and thorough education system for all the students in
23 Roane County? This is not a skill question. I believe you all
24 do all that you can for what you've been provided. Let me give

1 you an example.

2 Mr. Garner, last night, you said it exactly. Your
3 comments was, I cannot reach these kids with what I'm provided.
4 That is the point that we're talking about here.

5 (Applause.)

6 KEVIN HALL: You are unable to fulfill your obligation.
7 It's not your fault. I think you do a great job. I appreciate
8 all the years of experience. You're not able to do what your
9 supposed to do, right? The state has not enabled you to do
10 that.

11 Ms. Stellato, I applaud you for pointing out the
12 other county last night. There is a clear difference in the
13 level of efficiency and the thoroughness of education from that
14 county and ours. I hope we can all agree on that, right? We
15 can always improve. I don't believe that is a staff issue. I
16 don't think that's a capability issue. I think that the state
17 has not enabled Roane County to be able to perform at that
18 level.

19 I was actually on the finance committee that the
20 board put together to review finances. There's no question in
21 my mind that there was mismanagement. Call it really, really
22 poor decision making. No foresight in budgeting and how we're
23 going to pay for things.

24 (One-minute timer.)

1 KEVIN HALL: A lack of oversight at multiple levels. And,
2 unfortunately, that's why we're here today. Because the state
3 framework gives zero forgiveness for those types of actions.

4 So to the board, if you accept this document as it's
5 written, you're stamping your name saying that you believe that
6 it clearly, completely, and adequately articulates the true
7 impact to the students and the families, communities, in Roane
8 County. If you vote yes for consolidation, you are stamping
9 your name on the fact that the state has enabled you -- that's
10 their duty -- enabled you to provide an efficient and thorough
11 education system for all of the kids in Roane County.

12 Lastly, ten second, I'm looking at a whole group here
13 that I know deeply love and care for all the students in Roane
14 County. There's zero question about your ability --

15 (Timer ringing.)

16 KEVIN HALL: -- your capabilities, or anything. So
17 appreciate your time.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our last speaker is Rachel Stepp.

20 RACHEL STEPP: Good evening. I'm Rachel Stepp. I'm a
21 first grade teacher here at Spencer Elementary.

22 This is a message born of deep empathy for every
23 family in our neighboring community. The process of school
24 consolidation brings an immense amount of uncertainty, stress,

1 and genuine grief. While the final decision has not yet been
2 made, we recognize that the discussion alone is causing
3 significant pain. And we want you to know that your feelings
4 are valid. We see your struggle, and our hearts are with you.

5 To the families, students, and staff facing this
6 challenging possibility, should our schools unite, we believe
7 in the promise of what we can build together. Our schools are
8 not just brick-and-mortar buildings. They are defined by the
9 people, the passion, and the traditions within them. Even as
10 we mourn the potential loss of a historic institution, we can
11 look forward to contributing to the best of both our
12 communities. We can grow together and become one large,
13 powerful community.

14 This belief in unity is a profound source of
15 strength, reminding us that we are better together. As the
16 scriptures tell us, Behold how good and pleasant it is when
17 brothers dwell in unity; Psalms 133:1. Make my joy complete by
18 being like minded, having the same love, being one in spirit,
19 and one of -- and one mind; Philippians 2:2.

20 We will be stronger by joining our resources, our
21 dedicated teachers, our unique programs, and our talented
22 students. We can create an educational environment with richer
23 opportunities for every child. We will honor your legacy.
24 Your history matters. We are committed to making sure your

1 traditions, your students' success stories, and your spirit
2 become a strong part of our united ideology.

3 We will welcome you with open arms. Our goal is to
4 ensure that every new student, family, and staff member feels a
5 deep sense of belonging and support from day one. You are not
6 just being absorbed. You are becoming essential members of a
7 new larger family.

8 Regardless of how the process concludes, we cannot
9 ignore the larger systemic failure that has brought us to this
10 point. The threat of closure and consolidation hangs over
11 every small rural town in West Virginia because our local
12 schools are not being -- not receiving the financial --
13 financial or structural support they need to thrive. We need a
14 unified voice now more than ever.

15 As your potential future partners, we share -- stand
16 with you and encourage every family to reach out to your state
17 legislatures today. Ask them, why are we forced to chose
18 between our cherished community schools and the resources our
19 children need? What immediate tangible action will you take to
20 support the financial stability of our rural schools and our
21 county and prevent future consolidation? Let's use this moment
22 as a potential transition to demand better for all of our
23 students.

24 Thank you.

1 (Applause.)

2 MR. MACE: Ms. Stellato, would you like to recess for a
3 moment to let your team gather --

4 MS. STELLATO: I think so, sir.

5 MR. MACE: Okay.

6 MS. STELLATO: Fifteen or 20 --

7 MR. MACE: Twenty minutes. Okay. So I have 6:03. So
8 we'll come back at 6:23. Stand in recess.

9 (A break was taken.)

10 MR. MACE: Okay. We'll call the hearing back to order.

11 All right. Ms. Stellato, are you ready to present?

12 MS. STELLATO: Yeah. Okay.

13 Okay. So each night that we've done these hearings,
14 when we've come back from recess, we talk about what's going on
15 up on the stage. And so we've done our best to have the team
16 capture the questions that have been asked. And so, hopefully,
17 we've accurately done that. I think we've asked for some
18 clarification in some places. But if we missed something, we
19 will do our best to circle back.

20 And I'm going to start before I jump into tonight.
21 Circling back to a few things from the previous hearings that
22 we need to go on record with some -- some points of
23 clarification. Just some extended information that we want to
24 make sure make it into the record.

1 One -- I was asked - I think it was Monday evening -
2 about my knowledge -- my first round of knowledge of when there
3 was any signs of financial difficulties. And, originally, I
4 said that was March of -- I said March of last year. It was
5 March of the previous year. So sometime between March and May
6 of the previous year when we were going into summer school. So
7 just a point of clarification on that.

8 And then, Ms. Boggs, if you'd like to unmute.

9 Ms. Boggs has some additional information that she
10 would like to share based off some -- some clarification points
11 that we need to make on that as well. Ms. Hardman. I'm sorry.

12 MS. HARDMAN: Can you hear me?

13 MS. STELLATO: Yes, ma'am.

14 MS. HARDMAN: You can? Can hear me?

15 MS. STELLATO: Yes.

16 MS. HARDMAN: Okay. Okay. So I wanted to clarify a
17 statement that I made last night. Last night, I stated that
18 spending on turf and construction for the new middle school had
19 worked to decrease our reserves. I want to make it clear that
20 in fact none of the turf itself was paid from fund 11, which is
21 our general fund. So, therefore, it did not directly reduce
22 our reserves. The turf was actually paid from leftover bond
23 funds.

24 However, if we had waited until after the

1 construction on the new middle school, those funds could have
2 been used to pay for some of the construction and furniture
3 costs that did hit our general fund. That is what I meant when
4 I made that statement.

5 Now, I want to say that there was a need for the
6 turf, and I understand why it was done. And we -- I've been
7 here for a long time. I've work for Roane County schools
8 for 31 years. And for years, the field up at the High School,
9 we -- we put a lot of money into that field to keep grass on it
10 just to let the high school team play on it. Not practice on
11 it but just play on it. And there was no way, with putting
12 another school up there and having those teams use the field,
13 that we were going to be able to use it the way it was.

14 So I'm not saying -- and I'm also not saying that the
15 construction of Spencer Middle School is what got us here.
16 There were other factors that contributed to the reduction of
17 our reserves. The loss of enrollment and corresponding
18 reductions in state aid, huge increases in special ed
19 contracted services costs, high employee absenteeism and
20 corresponding high substitute costs, and having too many
21 personnel over the state funding allowance all contributed to
22 our deficit.

23 Construction costs were a one-time thing. And we are
24 working to keep our personnel as low as possible and still

1 legally and effectively operate schools. But the rest of those
2 problems are ongoing with no light at the end of the tunnel.
3 We would love more than anything not to close these schools.
4 But at the end of FY '25, we have a \$1.36 million deficit.
5 Million dollars. That's huge. And we are projecting another
6 half a million -- another half a million dollars more in the
7 deficit by the end of this year. It's really hard to wrap your
8 head around, but we're talking of millions of dollars.

9 This team has worked so hard. And we are so
10 heartbroken. And we have taken every suggestion that everyone
11 has brought to us so seriously. But we have to keep schools
12 operating and, at the same time, pay down this deficit. And
13 that is just a monumental task. And so that's the
14 clarification that I wanted to make.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. STELLATO: Thank you, Ms. Hardman.

17 Mr. Garner, a question was asked about the size of
18 Spencer Middle School last night. And we missed that one.

19 And so -- so Mr. Garner is ready to talk about that.

20 MR. GARNER: School building authority has a formula that
21 they calculate. But you have to remember Spencer Middle School
22 was in design when they asked the SBA for funding. So at that
23 time, Spencer Middle School's population was a lot larger. So
24 based on how many students, there's so much money allotted per

1 student. And that's how the funding was originally set for.

2 Of course, then when it went out on bid, everything
3 came in overpriced. SBA said they would throw in some money.
4 We'd throw in a million dollars. We were originally 1.5
5 million on the hook -- on the original. That's what we said
6 would match. But then the prices came in. Because of COVID,
7 everything went up. And it was an extra million dollars that
8 the school building authority asked Roane County schools to put
9 in. So that would have been a total of 2.5 million that would
10 have been our contribution.

11 And as it was mentioned last night, our treasurer at
12 that time could not support the extra million dollars. I heard
13 that. Other board members heard that. So, hopefully, that
14 clarifies why -- why is it so big now is because we had more
15 kids back then when the design was being made.

16 MS. STELLATO: One thing I'd add to what Mr. Garner said.
17 The other piece is that when the -- I shared last night that
18 when we constructed the impact statement, there was a freeze
19 date of August 23rd. And when we froze that data on
20 August 23rd, Spencer Middle School, because of this year -- and
21 we believe we have the ability to make some moves in the
22 following year when we took -- kept the fifth grade here, that
23 dropped the enrollment at Spencer Middle School as well. So
24 that number is considerably lower than it was the first year

1 that it was in operation because we -- we kept the fifth grade
2 here at Spencer Elementary. So that also would -- would make a
3 difference in the enrollment from year to year.

4 Okay. I think I -- we circled back to everything
5 from -- from yesterday.

6 So, first of all, I want to say thank you for the
7 respect. Thank you for a good conversation this evening and --
8 and a level of acknowledgement of the heaviness of the work.
9 And I think we underestimated what three nights in a row of --
10 of wrestling with these heavy things would do to all of us.
11 We've been doing this for months. And -- and here we are,
12 night after night -- and we're going to do three more nights
13 next week, and it's going to get even heavier as we go into
14 that. So I just want to say thank you to everybody. And --
15 and we -- we've spent all day every day this entire week
16 reflecting on comments that were made, researching things.

17 You know, I will say this. The ride home last night
18 was a long ride home. It was a long ride home. And there were
19 no less than three staff members on the phone with me up until
20 probably almost midnight. And we were just wrestling with,
21 what did we miss? What -- what can we do? What -- what else
22 is there? Like what if we did this? What if we do that? Like
23 it's -- it's a constant. So I just want you to know that.

24 But, ultimately, we do, you know, have to keep moving

1 forward and run this process. So in speaking to some of the
2 comments that were made this evening and in moving forward,
3 there was a comment made -- and I appreciate the reference
4 because it made me think of something. And the team will tell
5 you, both -- both principals and the former staff at Spencer
6 Elementary, that I think a lot in stories and metaphors. And
7 so I appreciate the stories that were told this evening.

8 I was a military spouse. So I was never a military
9 leader. Never served in the military myself. But for those of
10 you who have been a military spouse, you understand that's --
11 that's a full-family commitment to that work. And so we always
12 had the mentality we win together, we lose together.

13 But you are a hundred percent right, Mr. Boggs, that
14 I should have used different words last night. And I should
15 have said I failed miserably because I led this team into this
16 charge and the construction of this statement, regardless of
17 the -- the type of environment in which we are writing it. So
18 I appreciate Mr. Hall's acknowledgement of that.

19 We did this quickly. But, nonetheless, we've got
20 several eyes -- several pairs of eyes. And so I think we --
21 we're all doing our best to acknowledge where we find places
22 that we could do better on that. And, ultimately, it does fall
23 with me.

24 I do also want to acknowledge that some of your

1 suggestions have been taken by board members, if they have
2 engaged in investigating the routes and had spent some time in
3 transportation. And so we appreciate their investment of time
4 this week and previous weeks as well, because they had done
5 that. And they don't get to speak tonight, so I'm going to
6 speak for them on that topic. They're taking that very
7 seriously.

8 And as -- you know, as one of the teachers said, you
9 know, we have to face this reality with courage and wisdom.
10 And I've said every night -- I'm going to keep saying every
11 night, there's not -- we're not going to quit thinking is there
12 another way -- is there another way to do this.

13 You asked -- we -- we talked about COVID. And COVID
14 definitely forever changed the impact of the landscape. I will
15 not even begin to get into the methods of the data analysis. I
16 am not the math person. So I'm going to stay away from that.
17 But we would be remiss to not acknowledge the impact that
18 COVID -- you know, and rightfully so, as you pointed out, in
19 the -- in the way that we calculated the data. But the truth
20 of the matter is, it has forever changed the landscape of our
21 schools.

22 We have -- we have students who realized that -- that
23 they might be better served in an environment in their home.
24 They might be better served in a homeschool environment; that

1 that worked for them. And so it is unfortunately -- and then,
2 you know, to put the -- the -- the work stoppage right on the
3 back of that. Or, you know, either vice versa. I'm getting my
4 timeline confused there.

5 But people have decided that there are other options
6 and other ways to be -- to be schooled. Because if we had our
7 entire homeschool population and we had our entire virtual
8 school population and we weren't losing students and families
9 due to natural moving in the communities, we probably wouldn't
10 be sitting here tonight.

11 We've acknowledge -- admitted there have been things
12 that could have been changed in the past. This team has
13 very -- tried very hard to keep our eyes focused on moving
14 forward. And -- and, unfortunately, as Ms. Hardman pointed out
15 tonight, the cost of doing that is great. It is absolutely
16 great.

17 And so we're going to try to jump into some of
18 these -- these questions that you guys have -- have raised this
19 evening. Oh, let's see.

20 Do the fiduciary responsibilities apply to the
21 construction of SMS? Absolutely.

22 Do you believe that the -- that's Mr. Garner's. I
23 will not steal his thunder.

24 What happens to the schools when they close?

1 Michelle, would you like to share your opinion on
2 that? Oh, not the schools. The community. I'm sorry.

3 MS. ASH: So the impact on the community. When -- earlier
4 in -- in these hearings, somebody asked about how many hours
5 the people before you have spent mulling over the exact
6 question of what is going to happen to our communities. You --
7 you just don't understand what many of us have done this whole
8 entire time.

9 We are members of this entire community. We have
10 raised our children here. We -- we have thought this over so
11 much. And we have wrestled with every emotion that you can
12 possibly think of. We have cried. We have been angry. We
13 have been disappointed. We have been ashamed. We have faced
14 them all. And I want you to understand that we have done that,
15 because we also put ourselves where you are.

16 So we know -- we've -- we've known this for a long
17 time that every -- with every action there's a consequence. We
18 understand that. The exact consequence can't be measured or
19 spot on right at this minute. But we acknowledge that there
20 are possibilities. We are not happy about every possibility
21 that can happen here. But we are human, and we have
22 wrestled -- wrestled with those things.

23 But I, and everybody up here, have listened to every
24 single comment that you've made over all of these -- these

1 hearings. We see Facebook pages. We know all the things that
2 people are thinking. And we appreciate them all. Even the
3 ones that step on our toes and make us feel like we are -- you
4 know, we have so much of an impact on what's happening here,
5 and we know that.

6 But I have heard you talk about what your community
7 is. And your -- your schools are the heart of your community.
8 We've heard that. They're your treasures. They're your
9 foundations. They're your identity. They're your hub.
10 They're your center. They're your family. And we understand
11 that, we recognize that, and we realize that. And we are also
12 a part of that.

13 So no one can sit up here and exactly say what the
14 impact to our community is. But I am so thankful to hear some
15 of the comments tonight about how every teacher, every staff
16 member in every one of these schools love their children. And
17 if their children came to your all schools, your teachers and
18 your staff would love them just the same.

19 So the impact is there. We know it's there. We
20 can't predict what it's going to be. But we are aware that
21 there are impacts. And we just can't contemplate exactly what
22 those might be. But please know that we understand that there
23 are going to be impacts if this goes through.

24 MS. STELLATO: The question was raised, what will happen

1 to the schools and the buildings when they are closed? I will
2 be honest with you. We have not fully gone down that road yet
3 because we've been definitely cautioned about proceeding --
4 proceeding with caution and care and keeping in the moment
5 right now.

6 Roane County unfortunately has a history of disposal
7 of closed and consolidated buildings. And -- and what I will
8 tell you at this point is we will do everything in our power,
9 much like the process that was run by this board with the
10 previous building, to make sure that it becomes something that
11 is valuable to the community and is repurposed as best as we
12 can to ensure that -- that happens.

13 If you've listened to some of the board meetings,
14 I've talked about some ideas that I have for schools -- for
15 some of the schools and the buildings. Just some things that a
16 group of committed individuals might be able to run with. I've
17 even offered to even assist in some of that. So -- and those
18 would be roads that we will have to cross -- bridges we'll have
19 to cross when we -- when we get there.

20 That's obviously going to be an additional heavy
21 piece of this -- this puzzle and something that we will have to
22 have a team of folks together to figure out what is best and
23 how -- how do we maintain some of the integrity of what those
24 buildings are in that process.

1 Ms. Tanner, if you'd like to un-mute and tackle the
2 personnel question that was raised.

3 MS. TANNER: Can you hear me?

4 MS. STELLATO: Yes, ma'am.

5 MS. TANNER: Okay. Good evening, everyone.

6 So Mr. Atkinson had asked how many jobs would be lost
7 in the community. And at the time that we did the impact
8 statement, at the time it was created, the student enrollment
9 was 1560. So the number of jobs that would be lost based on
10 that number enrollment was 12 professional and 16 service,
11 which would have been a total of 28. However, the final number
12 will be based on student enrollment at the time of personnel
13 season. From then to now, we have lost enrollment. So that
14 number will be adjusted accordingly when we get to personnel
15 season.

16 MS. STELLATO: Thank you, Ms. Tanner.

17 Mr. Garner, on the transportation questions.

18 MR. GARNER: All right. If you don't mind, Ms. Stellato,
19 I'm going to go with the enrollment numbers, how it was
20 calculated, because I'm set up for that. Last night, I did the
21 projector. I'm going to try to do the screen now. Hopefully,
22 you can see that. If you need to move, I understand that. But
23 we're at Spencer Elementary, and I will go through the method
24 and how we projected what Spencer Elementary School's

1 enrollment will be.

2 All right. For those who have looked at the plan
3 that was put on the website, I'm on page 11. And the document
4 is a template that we have to answer the questions that's
5 inside the template. And I had to explain a projection method,
6 what was used. And it says, Explain the projection method
7 utilized addressing the relationship between the most recent
8 certified October enrollment -- the certified October
9 enrollment for the previous three years and the most recent
10 census data for the county.

11 So if you look here, I went down -- we're going to
12 do -- we're here at Spencer Elementary. I found a decline
13 of 1.7 percent looking at the four years. Now, did part of
14 those four years hit the end of COVID? Yes. But I was
15 instructed to look at the last four years.

16 So if I back up a few pages, Spencer Elementary is
17 right here. One, two, three, four. So in the 21-22 school
18 year, Spencer Elementary was at 443. The last number -- when
19 we had to make the document, I had to use last year's data --
20 how many kid were enrolled October 1st last year. It was 413.

21 That is a net of 30 kids that was lost over that
22 time. Well, 30 kids divided by 443 is .06. Divide it out for
23 the four years that we're covering; .0169. You move the
24 decimal two places to make a percentage. That's 1.69. I

1 rounded to 1.7. That's where the number came from.

2 All right. So let's look at a number that's current
3 at Spencer Elementary at the time we did the document. And
4 like we said before, we froze the data in August. Let's
5 pick -- yeah. I guess it doesn't really matter. We can pick
6 any of these. We can pick kindergarten at 84. Cohort means --
7 all right. This year, they're in kindergarten. Next year,
8 they'll be in first grade.

9 So how did the 84 number turn into the 83 number?
10 Well, that's what happens when we're declining at 1.7 percent,
11 which basically means we are keeping 98.3 percent of the kids.
12 So if you take 98.3 percent of 84, turns out to be 83 -- there
13 will be some decimal to that. And then the next school year,
14 when first grade becomes second grade, we lose more kids.

15 We haven't seen an increase. Our average decline for
16 this building -- again, another 1.7 percent is taken off over
17 and over and over using the cohort going down. So that's how
18 the calculation was done. I explained the method in the
19 document. In education, we use cohorts. We always compare
20 data. How -- are the kids doing better on assessments? We go
21 from year to year. The same set of kids is what we look at.
22 That's what I use for enrollment.

23 All right. The next question was on transportation.
24 As I said earlier, I tried to show stuff on the board last

1 night. Let's see if it's any better on the screen. It's in
2 color.

3 All right. As I mentioned last night, each bus
4 driver has to turn in their enrollment to me. We happened to
5 be at Geary school last night, so I brought up Grannies Creek.
6 That's bus number 49. Ranell Windland is the driver. Here's
7 how many stops the bus makes. Here's the names of the roads.
8 I covered up the address. We don't want to give out too much
9 information on the students. And here's the pick-up times, how
10 long they're on the bus, and what time they're dropped off in
11 the afternoon. So the driver turns that in.

12 As somebody mentioned earlier, I do have GPS on the
13 buses. So this was hard to see last night. Hopefully, I can
14 make it better tonight.

15 All right. The blue lines are where the bus travels
16 during its whole route. Bus 22 is the example here.
17 Hopefully, you can see the highlighted one here. Bus 22 is
18 going 36 miles an hour. It said 6:26 of a morning. And it
19 gives the coordinates of the bus. So I look at that.

20 I get a signal every minute from the bus, where it's
21 located. And that will tell me how long it takes that bus to
22 travel a road, or how long they're at a stop, or what time they
23 actually leave the bus garage. What time they would get to
24 Spencer Elementary School. What time they would get to Roane

1 County High School and Spencer Middle School.

2 I use these data on these different screens to come
3 up what the future is going to be if I need to consolidate. I
4 will bring up some routes here in this area. Last night, I
5 brought up the Geary routes that are going to be modified. But
6 we have routes here in town that are also going to be modified.

7 So in the Spencer area, this is Peniel Road, if you
8 can see that. Peniel Road is on the -- almost to Jackson
9 County. We are going to have to turn the bus shorter than what
10 we are currently driving. So if consolidation goes through,
11 the bus is going to be turned at the Clarence Community Church,
12 and then come back out. There are just a handful of
13 students -- a couple that are going to have to come and meet
14 the bus.

15 Now, I don't know if they're going to have to walk, a
16 parent is going to take them, they get a friend to take them.
17 I have no idea how long the transition is going to be from when
18 they leave their door till they get to bus 58 there on Peniel
19 Road.

20 But once the students are picked up, that bus also
21 goes out to Buffalo Creek Road that's in Jackson County.
22 That's where the bus turns around. Comes back on 33, goes to
23 what's now called Scott Miller Hill Road, the old road, and
24 picks up students on that as it's coming back towards Spencer.

1 So that's one of the routes that's going to have to be modified
2 because it was impossible to do it within an hour since I had
3 that restriction on the consolidation.

4 Another route in this area is out in the Reedy area.
5 The blue lines that you see are what we're currently running.
6 If you see a yellow line, those are students that we're not
7 going to pick up at their door that live within two miles. And
8 if you see anything in red, like you do here on Seamon Fork and
9 Noble Ridge, those are kids that live over two miles that they
10 can be compensated for.

11 And that's in lieu of transportation. Briefly talked
12 about that last night. It's \$1.60 a day -- is what the current
13 rate is. That will be something the board will be discussing.
14 I'll give Ms. Stellato a recommendation on what a fair number
15 needs to be. Hopefully, a parent, if they had to bring their
16 kids out, will not have to use over a gallon of gas. But I
17 realize that they're going to have to go out, bring the kid to
18 the bus, then go back home, and do the same thing in the
19 afternoon. So they're going over that road four times; twice
20 of a morning, twice in the afternoon.

21 So on this, as I mentioned earlier, we're not going
22 to be able to run Seamon Fork. Bus 44 is currently running
23 that. And it will not be able to run it and get in town within
24 the one hour. Bus 44 when -- this year is running Seamon Fork.

1 Gets on Liverpool Road. Then goes down Middle Fork. When it's
2 on Middle Fork, then it hits the new bypass. Picks up a
3 student on the new bypass. And then takes Tucker Run to pick
4 up some families there. And then comes into town on Route 33.

5 We have bus ten that's out in the same area. It does
6 all of Liverpool Road. It turns at the Frozencamp Road,
7 Liverpool Road at the Jackson County line. Bus ten comes in
8 from there. It goes up. Once it gets back to Route 14, it
9 goes up to Cains Run.

10 She would go all the way out Cains Run roughly two
11 miles. Not going to be able to happen because I got to get her
12 in town. Bus ten is also one of the main buses we use at
13 Dollar Tree. It picks up a ton of kids at Dollar Tree. So
14 next year, to get everybody in within the hour, she is a just
15 barely going to go up Cains Run, enough to turn the bus around
16 there at the church right at the beginning of Cains Run.

17 On the Grace side of Route 14, coming in from that
18 way, we have Ron Stewart (phonetic) in bus 29 doing that.
19 Right now, Ron Stewart goes up Peters Cave and also Toms Run
20 and runs those roads. He picked up John Boggs Road this year,
21 so he's also running that one. But for us to get bus 29 in
22 with the hour, we are probably going to have to give up running
23 Toms Run and Peter's Cave. And those parents will have to come
24 out to Barcutt to meet. When he leaves Barcutt, he also picks

1 up kids on Hope Drive.

2 Another area in the Spencer area is bus 22. One of
3 the consolidations we had to do last year where I had to end up
4 cutting five routes to try to help save money was combining bus
5 eight and bus 22. Danny White's route with Mike Hughes' route.
6 Danny retired. Mike Hughes got the route.

7 So we're talking about Otto Road, Clover Road,
8 Vandale Fork, Slate Road. All of those were run between those
9 two buses last year. This year, it's all one bus. So what's
10 going to happen next year, Mike Hughes will not have over an
11 hour to try to accomplish all that. So we had to give
12 something up. And what we're going to give up is Clover Road.
13 The least number of kids in that area live on Clover Road. So
14 that was the decision made.

15 Parents are -- if they live on Clover have a couple
16 options. Clover in the upper end meets Otto Road. At the
17 bottom end, it comes down to Route 36. So there is a portion
18 of Clover Road that you see here in red that we would have to
19 compensate those families. The yellow portions, again, are
20 students that live within two miles.

21 And bus -- before, it used to run all the way up to
22 Orchard Run. We're not going to be able to go up to Orchard
23 Run to -- pick up those kids also on Otto from Orchard Run. So
24 next year, this bus will start up here at the intersection

1 where Clover and Otto meet, leave there, come down Otto, go to
2 the far end of Vandale Fork towards the Geary side -- go on
3 Vandale Fork, picking up students, come back, hit Route 36, and
4 then come into town. But, again, we have to sacrifice the
5 students on Clover Road.

6 Overall, the whole plan affects over a hundred
7 students. Of those hundred students, 30 of them are over two
8 miles. The board has been made aware of that.

9 So when everybody has to make a decision, it does
10 hurt kids. We understand that. As I mentioned earlier, I have
11 no idea how long a kid is going to be away from their house
12 before they get on the bus. And the same thing evening time.
13 I don't know what the parents' arrangements are going to be for
14 the students. And there was no way for me to calculate
15 additional travel time that it's going to take for those
16 students. I did the best I could.

17 All right. As I mentioned -- there was a question
18 here about the intent of maximum bus ride time. I don't know
19 how long it's going to be. The intent was to show travel time.
20 The unknowns, I can't address. I have no way. I don't know
21 how long somebody's driveway is. If they'd have to walk down.
22 I don't know if they have a vehicle that can get them there
23 quickly. Somebody mentioned last night about a 12-year-old
24 girl having to walk in the dark. Hopefully, that would never

1 happen.

2 The impact of travel times, I get it. And our bus
3 drivers has faced this before. A kid may need to use the
4 restroom. We understand that. If there's not a school nearby,
5 we're -- we are sort of limited on what we can do. There is no
6 safe option.

7 MS. STELLATO: I think you were also asking -- whoever
8 asked about the policies and the intent of the policy. I think
9 the intent of the policy when it was created -- and, obviously,
10 I wasn't there, and -- you know, because this is above us. But
11 I think the heart behind it is that there would be some level
12 of accountability to school districts who are faced with this
13 to force the hand to make sure we're not continuing kids with
14 two-hour bus rides and what have it.

15 So that's what I believe the intent of the policy is.
16 Do I think the kids in Randolph County can get to school in an
17 hour either? Huh-uh. I don't. And I think we're going to
18 struggle here too. And so I can't speak to the intent, but
19 that's my guess is it was a way to hold us accountable to do
20 whatever we have to do to get it as low as we can get it.

21 All right. I'm going to end. I think I've gotten
22 the majority of them until I get to talking about fair and
23 equitable and also, you know, are we enabled to provide an
24 education for the kids. In an effort to -- to -- like

1 Mr. Perkins said, you know, the metaphor of I didn't eat the
2 candy, right? The -- the tendency is to be like, well, it's
3 not me. I didn't create this.

4 But that -- we've tried -- you know, we've been
5 criticized for being positive. But we're trying very hard to
6 not look back. And I know you have to look back or you'll
7 repeat it, correct? And so, you know, that's a hard line to
8 walk for us as a team, that we understand accountability.

9 You know, there's been some questions raised about
10 retaliation. We have no space for that. We have no space for
11 retaliation. What we do have space for is accountability and
12 accountability policies to your staff and to the people that
13 you serve and the families that you serve. And so, yes, there
14 -- there are times when -- when staff members are held
15 accountable for choices that are made, like as we all should
16 be.

17 So, you know, I want to be very careful not to do the
18 it's not me kind of mentality. But I do want to say that
19 you're -- you're a hundred percent right, Mr. Hall. I don't
20 believe that we're set up to provide what the kids need in the
21 state of West Virginia. And I think all of us are up here
22 trying to give appropriate answers that allow us to operate in
23 the confines of what -- what we have and the confines of what
24 we've been given without trying to be victims or say, oh, it's

1 not me. That's not our intent. This team works real hard to
2 figure out, okay, how else could we do it. How else could we
3 do it?

4 You know, we joke. I have something called the next
5 year notebook. And I tell them that. At one point, my staff
6 said no new things. Like we have to -- we have to stay focused
7 on what we're doing. And it's really hard to not get ahead of
8 ourselves but to try to stay within our means when you're
9 trying to dream of, once we get through this, is there a way
10 that we can begin to be that school district that -- that --
11 that has addressed the education inequalities and things like
12 that.

13 But I use this as an example because Mr. Perkins last
14 night probably said -- and I can't quote you because it all
15 runs together. But something to the effect of let's fight.
16 Like, let's -- let's figure this out. And -- and what -- I
17 would plant the seed on that, right? Because I sit in a very
18 unique seat in that I have to do what's -- what I feel like
19 is -- is best to balance the budget in Roane County schools.

20 However, I will use a bit of a metaphor. And I will
21 probably mess it up as Mr. Rector (phonetic) is here, and he'll
22 probably laugh at me trying to do this. But the West Virginia
23 SSAC figured it out. They figured out a few years ago that
24 rural communities are at a disadvantage by one-size-fits-all

1 policies.

2 And so they began to calculate -- and I'm going to
3 mess it up because I'm not a basketball coach. But they began
4 to calculate factors that negatively impact children who grow
5 up in rural communities and began to try to mitigate that
6 process with a re-ranking. And, again, forgive me if I'm
7 misquoting this and insulting anybody that went through that
8 process.

9 I was a principal at the time and -- and was engaged
10 in those conversations. And -- and at first, it seemed very
11 foreign to us. But then, after a while, you began to realize
12 it did start to mitigate against some of the discrepancies that
13 exist in public education. And so I don't have an answer for
14 the funding formula, but something needs to happen. And
15 something needs to take into account the disparity that a
16 student -- it was brought up tonight about excessive -- what's
17 it called -- contracted services for our special education
18 students.

19 We can't get high-quality special education services.
20 God love Ms. Tolley in the back that she's from here, and she
21 loves doing speech, and she stays with us, and she keeps doing
22 this. We have to pay our former employees to come back because
23 they get a higher rate and a higher pay and, daggone it,
24 they're worth it. Pardon me for -- for losing it. But our

1 employees are worth having the opportunity to get paid a
2 contracted wage and a decent wage so they can feed their
3 families.

4 Until we figure out that our education system is
5 actually worth the work that we put into it and we fund it such
6 that our people can survive and our kids can get what they need
7 and that sweet little school out at Geary can stay open and not
8 have to ride those buses, we're going to keep doing this.

9 So, Mr. Perkins, thank you - I will say that - for --
10 for moving forward with that charge. And I hope that we're not
11 working against you. And I hope you can understand why this
12 board is tasked with the choices that we're making. But we do
13 need people to start asking questions and begin to say how else
14 can we do this.

15 And I think and I hope that we've answered all of
16 your questions. And I appreciate everybody that showed up this
17 evening.

18 Mr. Mace, I am finished.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. MACE: Okay. That concludes the public hearing for
21 Spencer Elementary -- Elementary School. I would entertain a
22 motion now to adjourn until our next special meeting. That
23 will be on Monday, November the 3rd, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. That
24 will be at Spencer Middle School. The next regular board

1 meeting is on Thursday, November the 6th, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
2 That will be at Roane County High School.

3 Need a motion, please.

4 MS. RICHARDSON: So moved.

5 MR. MACE: Ms. Richardson on the motion.

6 MR. MINNEY: Second.

7 MR. MACE: Mr. Minney on the second. All those in favor
8 say aye. Those opposed? (No response.) That motion carries
9 five to zero, and we are adjourned.

10 Thank you all for coming.

11 (Hearing concluded at 7:08 p.m.)

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

1 SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
2 OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE
3

4 I, Erin E. Kincaid, RPR, Official Reporter of the
5 Fifth Judicial Circuit, West Virginia, do hereby certify that
6 the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the
7 proceedings had in re the Special Meeting of the Board of
8 Education of the County of Roane at Spencer Elementary School,
9 on Wednesday, October 29, 2025, as reported by me in machine
10 shorthand.

11 I hereby certify that the transcript within meets
12 the requirements of the Code of the State of West Virginia,
13 Section 51-7-4, and rules pertaining thereto as promulgated by
14 the Supreme Court of Appeals.

15 Given under my hand this 13th day of November,
16 2025.
17

18 
19

20 Erin E. Kincaid, RPR
21 Official Reporter, Fifth Judicial
22 Circuit, West Virginia
23
24

ROANE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA, SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL
IN RE: CLOSURE AND CONSOLIDATION OF GEARY AND WALTON
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL AND CONSOLIDATION
OF K-5 INTO SPENCER ELEMENTARY AND GRADES
6-8 INTO SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND
CONSOLIDATION OF PRE-K INTO ROANE COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL

PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 3, 2025
5:00 PM

SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL
102 CHAPMAN AVENUE
SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA

Donna H. Miller,
Court Reporter

CAPITOL CITY REPORTING
"PROFESSIONAL STENOMASK FOR THE RECORD"

POST OFFICE BOX 11394, CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA 25339 • (304) 767-4231 FAX (304) 344-9506

A P P E A R A N C E S**BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADMINISTRATORS:**

MICHELLE STELLATO
SUPERINTENDENT
CORRIE OTA
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ANN HARDMAN
MICHELLE ASH
LORRA TANNER
AMY COLE
JERRY GARNER

BOARD MEMBERS:

JEFF MACE
DARIS HARPER
DENNS CARPENTER
JAMES MINNEY
EILEEN RICHARDSON

PRINCIPALS:

MEGAN STARCHER
ANNETTE CLAYPOOL
JENNIFER HUNT
SARABETH MONK
SPECIAL ED COORDINATOR
LORI HAMRIC COTTRELL

APPEARANCES (CONTINUED)**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SIGNED UP TO SPEAK:**

ANNETTE CLAYPOOL
JEANETTE ATKINSON
DEANA KENDALL
CATHY DRADDOCK
JONAH RECTOR
HATTIE PERKINS
NONA PERKINS
BEN SHAMBLIN
JUSTIN SHEARS
JULIANNA RENFOLD
ANDREA HAYS
GABE BOGGS
RACHEL HAYS
LISA MESSINO
JOE MESSINO

1 NOVEMBER 3, 2025

2 5:00 P.M.

3 MR. MACE: Good evening. I would like to
4 welcome everyone to the public hearing of the Roane
5 County Board of Education. This public hearing is
6 called to order. My name is Jeff Mace. As President
7 of the Roane County Board of Education, I have
8 determined that at least a quorum of the Board and the
9 Superintendent are present. It is now 5:00 p.m.
10 Registration to address the Board at this public
11 hearing has now closed.

12 This hearing is convened in accordance
13 with the terms of West Virginia Code §18-5-13a and
14 State Board of Education Policy 6204 in connection
15 with the proposed closure of Geary and Walton
16 Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of
17 their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their
18 grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the
19 consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into
20 the space now occupied by the Office of Student
21 Support Services at Roane County High School.

22 The statute and State Board policy
23 provide that members of the public:

- 24 1. have the right to be present;

- 1 2. have a right to submit statements and
2 testimony; and
3 3. have a right to question school
4 officials.

5 Members of the public, in the order of
6 sign-in, will be allowed to make statements, offer
7 testimony and ask questions of school officials.

8 A total of 15 members of the public have
9 indicated their desire to submit statements or
10 testimony or question school officials. In order to
11 give every speaker a fair opportunity to submit
12 statements and testimony and to question school
13 officials, five minutes have been allotted for each
14 registered speaker. The responses of school officials
15 to questions shall not be included in the time
16 allotted.

17 No member of the public may present more
18 than once. No member of the public may "grant" time
19 to another presenter. Corrie Ota has been designated
20 as the time keeper and will advise when one minute is
21 remaining for each presentation and when time has
22 expired. It is not necessary to consume the total
23 amount of time allotted.

24 As stated in the public notice of this

1 hearing, written statements and materials that were
2 submitted to the Superintendent before October 24,
3 2025 will be given full consideration. That deadline
4 has passed, and written materials may not be submitted
5 during this hearing.

6 All questions shall initially be directed
7 to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may elect
8 to respond to the question or may designate another
9 school official to respond to the question.

10 At the conclusion of all presentations by
11 members of the public, the Superintendent or another
12 member of the administration will be given the
13 opportunity to respond to any information that has
14 been presented by members of the public.

15 Apart from questions directed to the
16 Superintendent and answered by the Superintendent or
17 another member of the administration, there will be no
18 direct debate or dialogue between members of the
19 public and Board members, or members of the public and
20 school officials.

21 Action on the proposed closure of Geary
22 and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the
23 consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer
24 Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle

1 School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from
2 all schools into the space now occupied by the Office
3 of Student Support Services at Roane County High
4 School will be subject of a Board of Education meeting
5 scheduled for November 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. At that
6 time, the Board will conduct all deliberations in open
7 session and a vote will be taken in open session
8 following the Board deliberations.

9 That concludes the hearing statement.
10 Ms. Stellato, will now speak.

11 MS. STELLATO: Good evening members of the
12 Board of Education, staff, parents, students and
13 members of the Roane County community.

14 Thank you for joining us tonight for this
15 important public hearing regarding the proposed
16 closure and consolidation of Walton Elementary Middle
17 School and Geary Elementary Middle School and the
18 consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer
19 Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle
20 School and the consolidation of all pre-K students
21 from all schools into the space now occupied by the
22 Office of Student Support located at Roane County High
23 School.

24 As required by West Virginia Code, §18-5-

1 13a, WVBE policies 6200 and 6204, this hearing and the
2 construction of the required impact statement provides
3 an opportunity to present the rationale for the
4 proposed changes, to share the data and planning that
5 inform this proposal, and most importantly to listen
6 to the concerns, ideas and perspective of our
7 community.

8 On a personal and professional level,
9 none of the members of the leadership team nor the
10 members of the Board of Education wish to be engaged
11 in this process. However, we've been charged to lead
12 the district through this most difficult time. And
13 therefore must undertake this work. We understand the
14 magnitude of the decisions that will be made in the
15 next few days and do not take that responsibility
16 lightly.

17 The purpose of tonight's hearing is not to
18 finalize any decision, but to ensure that all
19 stakeholders understand and engage with:

20 why this consolidation is being
21 considered.

22 How it would affect students, families
23 and staff.

24 What opportunities and challenges this

1 proposal presents for the future of Roane County
2 Schools.

3 Over the past several years, Roane County
4 Schools has faced a combination of challenges that are
5 increasingly common in rural districts across West
6 Virginia.

7 Declining student enrollment and
8 community population.

9 Rising operational and maintenance costs
10 for our older facilities.

11 Difficulty attracting and retaining
12 certified staff across multiple small campuses.

13 The need to provide equitable access to
14 academic programs, extracurricular activities and
15 student supports across all of our communities.

16 A declining, and now negative, fund
17 balance that is needed to effectively operate our
18 school system.

19 Additionally, the State of West Virginia
20 declared a state of emergency in Roane County Schools
21 in July of 2025, citing failure to approve a closure
22 and consolidation plan, budgeting deficiencies,
23 building utilization well below average, and a 2.5
24 million dollar deficit that has been reduced already

1 to 1.5 million, but expected to climb 500,000 to 1
2 million more due to personnel overages from last
3 year's personnel season and the required addition of
4 special education staff that have been added this
5 school year.

6 Despite all of these hurdles, our goal is
7 to ensure that every child in Roane County, regardless
8 of where they live, has access to a safe, effective
9 and academically strong learning environment.

10 The proposal under consideration would:

11 Close Walton Elementary Middle School and
12 Geary Elementary Middle School and Geary Elementary
13 Middle School at the conclusion of the 2025-2026
14 school year.

15 Consolidate both school populations into
16 Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and create an
17 early childhood center in the student support area at
18 Roane County High School.

19 Ensure that transportation routes,
20 staffing, and support services are planned carefully
21 to minimize disruption and preserve community
22 connections.

23 Reduce the fiscal deficit by
24 approximately 1.4 million dollars annually.

1 This proposal is guided by the following
2 priorities:

3 Education Quality - Improvement to the
4 educational quality for all students, offer a broader
5 curriculum, specialized teachers, and enhanced
6 extracurricular opportunities.

7 Equity - All students, regardless of home
8 community, deserve access to comparable resources and
9 facilities.

10 Fiscal Responsibility - Consolidation
11 reduces duplicated costs in administration, utilities,
12 and facility maintenance - freeing funds for classroom
13 instruction and student supports.

14 Long-Term Sustainability - A consolidated
15 facility positions Roane County Schools for stable
16 enrollment and improved efficiency for decades to
17 come.

18 By now I hope that you've each had an
19 opportunity to thoroughly review the Impact Statement
20 and supporting data compiled by the leadership team
21 that sits before you. The document was arranged with
22 specific sections addressing enrollment, facilities,
23 finance, personnel, student transportation,
24 educational programs, and the community. Tonight we

1 invite you to ask questions about the construction of
2 the plan and the future impacts of its implementation.

3 We recognize that schools are not only
4 educational institutions but also the anchors of
5 community identity and pride.

6 We approach this process with respect,
7 transparency, and a commitment to open dialogue. The
8 voices of Walton and Geary families, staff and
9 community members are essential to shaping the final
10 decision and Roane County Schools' collective path
11 forward.

12 Following tonight's hearing:

13 All public comments will be recorded and
14 considered by the Roane County Board of Education.

15 The Board will review the data, public
16 input and recommendations before making the final
17 decision on Thursday, November 6, 2025 at the regular
18 meeting of the board.

19 Should the closure and consolidation move
20 forward, a transition plan will be developed
21 collaboratively with staff, parents and community
22 representatives.

23 Change, especially when it involves
24 schools that have served generations, is never easy.

1 But as stewards of our children's education, we must
2 plan not just for today, but for the next 20 to 30
3 years.

4 Our mission remains clear: to provide
5 every student in Roane County with the best possible
6 education in a safe, supportive and forward-looking
7 environment.

8 Thank you for your time, your
9 participation and your continued commitment to the
10 children of Roane County are appreciated.

11 MR. MACE: Ms. Ota?

12 MS. OTA: Yes. Your participation and
13 attendance are encouraged. Speakers are asked to
14 express themselves in a civil manner with due respect
15 to the dignity and courtesy of others when making your
16 comments.

17 Speakers should be aware that the rights
18 of others, under the law defamation or invasion of
19 privacy, you can be held legally responsible. If you
20 are unsure of the legal ramifications of what you are
21 about to say, we encourage you to consult first with
22 your legal adviser.

23 As Mr. Mace has already stated tonight,
24 we have 15 people that signed up to speak. Therefore,

1 each person will have five minutes. As your time runs
2 down, I will let you know that you have one minute
3 left by making this sound.

4 Our first speaker tonight is Annette
5 Claypool, followed by Jeanette Atkinson.

6 MS. ANNETTE CLAYPOOL: Good evening,
7 everyone. I want to start by saying this is not
8 pleasant at all. There has been a heaviness in the
9 air for a while.

10 When the school consolidation or closure
11 is in the mix, it's more than a change on paper. It
12 is a loss to the community support.

13 Geary and Walton have been more than
14 supporters. They are places where children learned,
15 and they grew up surrounded by people who truly loved
16 them.

17 To feel heartbroken is an understatement
18 because we're not possibly saying goodbye to a place,
19 we are saying goodbye to memories.

20 This is a decision you can't make because
21 of financial challenges. We understand the reasons,
22 but that doesn't take away the pain.

23 I've been an educator in Roane County for
24 30 years, and I've seen a lot of change in that time,

1 but one thing has never changed, the love this
2 community has for its children.

3 Over the years, I've taught so many of
4 them, and not just in classrooms. Some of you, I
5 think used to go to the city pool where I managed and
6 gave swim lessons every summer.

7 I got to know so many families there. I
8 saw children take their first jump into the water, and
9 I never tired of seeing their faces when they did.

10 That's what teaching feels like, helping
11 someone take that leap and cheering them on every step
12 of the way.

13 Working in Geary was one of the greatest
14 lessons of my career. The people there, the staff,
15 the families, the students showed me what a true
16 community looks like.

17 The pride in that school, and I know the
18 same is true for Walton, SES, SMS and RCHS. These
19 places are built on love, dedication and care. That
20 is something we can never take away.

21 I also want to say this. We, Spencer
22 Middle School, understand what it feels like to be in
23 a building you love. When Spencer moved from the old
24 school to the new one, there was a real sadness there

1 too.

2 People miss the holes in the walls, the
3 smell of the hallways, the memories in every corner.
4 It felt like something was being lost. But over time,
5 they realized something important.

6 It wasn't the building that made them
7 feel special, it was the people. The heart of Spencer
8 didn't stay behind in that building, it came with us.

9 That's what I want to happen now. When
10 we bring together the heart of Geary, the pride of
11 Walton and the spirit of Spencer, we can grow
12 stronger. Together we can build something new,
13 something with the best parts, the community.

14 Our teachers and staff are ready. They
15 are ready to love the children, to support them and to
16 make sure they feel at home from the very first day.
17 That's what we do here. We take care of each other.

18 So tonight as we look back with a few
19 tears, I hope we can also look forward with hope,
20 because even though the building may change, the heart
21 of Roane County, the heart of our schools remains the
22 same. It beats in every student, every teacher and
23 every family sitting here tonight.

24 Thank you for loving your school so

1 deeply. Thank you for trusting us with your children.
2 we'll walk into this next chapter together with love,
3 with faith, and with the same Roane County spirit
4 that's carried us all these years.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our next speaker is
7 Jeanette Atkinson, followed by Deana Kendall.

8 MS. JEANETTE ATKINSON: My name is Jeanette
9 Atkinson. I would like to speak regarding the
10 consolidation document about our students' safety,
11 health and mental wellness.

12 I have two students, currently one is
13 attending Spencer Elementary, the other one in Spencer
14 Middle School.

15 Two years ago, they were both students at
16 Walton, and when we got them, we decided to keep them
17 there at Walton, and we drove them to school, and we
18 picked them up and we took them back for football.
19 So we've spent a lot of time on our Roane County
20 roads.

21 we had several near misses on the roads,
22 so we decided to transfer them to Spencer, and now
23 they can ride the bus sometimes, but while we were
24 driving, we could listen to books on our radio. We

1 could work on our multiplication tables or study. We
2 could eat and drink. We could take a nap, or they
3 could. Not me, I was driving.

4 They can't do that on the school bus.
5 Some bus drivers don't allow them to talk or laugh. I
6 don't think you and I could make it for a couple of
7 hours on the school bus without talking, much less a
8 child who has been in a classroom all day.

9 We are having talking about 250 students
10 to Spencer Elementary School, who already has about
11 500 I think.

12 Have you ever been in the pick-up lines
13 at Spencer Elementary School? It's backed all the way
14 down to the road, but let me tell you that all the
15 staff who works on the pick-up and drop-off line
16 because they are out there are out there when it's
17 100, when it's zero, when it's raining, snowing, and
18 especially at Spencer Elementary School, they've got
19 traffic control, whether there's traffic problems,
20 they get out students in the school safe.

21 But how many of students will be going
22 there and going to now be dropping off? They are
23 trying, but that line to drop-off on the one-access
24 road there backs all the way down onto Route 36 both

1 ways, almost out to the bridge, the same thing to get
2 out.

3 There are no other ways to get into the
4 elementary school on that access road. How difficult
5 would it be to build a new access road?

6 One thing I worry about being in that
7 line is, what if there is an emergency? A car cannot
8 get around that line and up to the school. How would
9 an emergency vehicle or a fire truck get up there?

10 If it's blocked completely at times, and
11 I think it's a hazard to all the students and the
12 personnel at that school.

13 But speaking of another access road, if
14 one could be built, how much would that cost? Is
15 there a way to do it?

16 That school started out as the primary
17 center for just a couple of grades, and it's been
18 expanded several times, and that expansion has caused
19 it to greatly exceed the infrastructure that's there
20 to support it, like the roads and the access and the
21 parking that we have to park on the playground for
22 events there.

23 I don't know if an access road could even
24 be built. How much would it cost? I think it would

1 cost more than our savings of \$1.45 million. How much
2 will turning lanes cost to get those cars off the road
3 that are backed up, and I know there couldn't be a
4 passing lane built on the bridge. There's nowhere for
5 it to go.

6 Adding all these students it will be even
7 more stacked up both ways, and I think you are going
8 to have to address those at some point.

9 How much is our students' safety, our
10 health and our mental wellbeing worth? How much is a
11 student's life worth?

12 I've lost a child, and I don't want
13 anyone else to have to do that.

14 I also think that the travel time for
15 each child should be from the time they leave home,
16 not from the time they get on the bus. To the child,
17 that's their time, from home, whether getting in their
18 parents' car or whatever.

19 So I think you will have to adjust the
20 bus routes to meet the guidelines, but that doesn't
21 adjust the time the child spends in transportation.

22 Thank you.

23 MS. OTA: Next we have Deana Kendall followed
24 by Cathy Craddock.

1 MS. DEANA KENDALL: Good evening. My name is
2 Deana Kendall. I teach eighth grade at Spencer Middle
3 School.

4 I tell my students all the time to want
5 to be better, you must do better, and always leave a
6 place better than you found it.

7 Those students sitting in our classrooms
8 today will come together at the high school tomorrow.
9 They will have to work together just as we do to build
10 something stronger, and I believe in them. I believe
11 in Spencer Middle School, Roane County and our
12 community.

13 I've tried today to embrace all the parts
14 of my job, not just the standards and the assessments,
15 but the relationships of the classroom culture and the
16 bigger picture.

17 Last year the data reminded me why we
18 believe so strongly in what we do. I use data to
19 guide my instruction, but the data represents far more
20 than numbers on the screen. It represents real
21 progress and potential.

22 I share this, this is something I share
23 because it explains the depth of our students, our
24 families and the dedication of everyone here. It

1 shows what happens when a community believes in their
2 schools and teachers believe in their students.

3 My goal is to welcome all students and
4 create not only academically strong students, but also
5 the young people who know how to take responsibility
6 to care about their communities, and to leave every
7 place better.

8 So tonight and through the rest of this
9 week, whatever decisions are made about our county's
10 future, I hope you don't lose sight of why we are
11 here.

12 We are here to focus on our students to
13 build together, not apart. We are here to move
14 forward as a whole, not just for this year or next,
15 but for the generations that will come after us
16 because when we do that, we build not just schools but
17 a stronger community together.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. OTA: Next we have Cathy Craddock,
20 followed by Jonah Rector.

21 MS. CATHY CRADDOCK: Good evening. My name
22 is Cathy Craddock. I'm the math teacher here at
23 Spencer Middle School. I have been teaching in Roane
24 County. This is my fourth year, but I have been a

1 middle school teacher for 20 years. So here's what I
2 know.

3 I know that Spencer Middle School
4 students are the sweetest kids I have ever taught, and
5 I've taught in three different counties.

6 Spencer Middle School students will rise
7 to the occasion, and will do better than what we
8 expect, because our teachers and our staff and our
9 community and the people in the building and around
10 town have great belief in students in the school and
11 in the school system.

12 Walton and Geary are buildings from my
13 childhood. I'm from Calhoun County. I do not live in
14 Roane County, but Roane County has a reputation, and
15 in Calhoun County you are the gold standard.

16 When we were playing football, it was
17 always we have to beat Roane County. They are our
18 arch rivals.

19 So standing here in front of you, and
20 with the community leaders from the other schools, as
21 an outsider, I can say that our heart is broken for
22 the community. Our heart is broken for your schools
23 and for the kids that's went through the school and
24 already graduated, and for the kids that are coming up

1 that will never get to experience what their parents
2 have experienced.

3 Calhoun kind of went through the same
4 thing when we left our beautiful old antique building.
5 The people in Calhoun County loved our building, as
6 I'm sure Walton and Geary and Spencer Middle School
7 love their buildings, and you can't replace that.
8 That feeling cannot be replaced and our schools have
9 been closed down for a long time.

10 So it's time, and I'm sorry for you all.
11 I really am. My heart goes out to every one of you.
12 You've got a tough decision to make, and it's no one's
13 fault, but it just has to be done.

14 So having said that, as an employee of
15 Roane County schools, I would like to say regardless
16 of the decisions that's made, no matter what happens,
17 my job as an educator is to educate your children,
18 however many comes through my door, I will do my
19 absolute best to give them the math knowledge they
20 need to be successful when they leave my room.

21 The evidence of that, we can just look at
22 last year's test scores for eighth grade math. My
23 kids entered my room. They were 54 percent in the
24 red. By the time they left my room in May, 22 percent

1 in the red.

2 According to Zoom-WV, Spencer Middle
3 School finished 49 percent proficient. That's 10
4 percent above the State average, which you average my
5 average with Spencer Middle School with Geary and
6 Walton, and Roane County finished tied for ninth place
7 out of the 55 counties.

8 You have incredible kids and whatever
9 staff ends up teaching your kids, I'm telling you,
10 they are the sweetest little souls in the world to me,
11 and I feel blessed and grateful to have touched even
12 just one of their little lives and one of the little
13 brains that walked through my door.

14 So with a heavy heart, but yet with
15 compassion, I feel so sorry for this entire community
16 regardless of what school you are at. You have my
17 prayers and you are in my thoughts, and Board members
18 and central office staff, you guys are -- you know you
19 are carrying a heavy burden.

20 So when I say my prayers, I'm praying for
21 you all and I'm praying for your communities, but most
22 of all, I am going to pray for your kids, because they
23 are so sweet, and they deserve the very best we can
24 give them.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. OTA: Next we have Jonah Rector followed
3 by Hattie Perkins.

4 MR. JONAH RECTOR: I apologize. I'm a little
5 vertically challenged. My name is Jonah Rector, and
6 I'm going to talk about my transition from Walton to
7 Spencer.

8 I had the unique opportunity to attend
9 both elementary and middle schools, from pre-K through
10 sixth grade. Then our family's situation changed, and
11 it allowed for me to have the chance to switch
12 schools.

13 With the prospect of school consolidation
14 and the fact that I wanted to play soccer for Spencer
15 Middle School, I chose to transfer. This transfer
16 would also give me the opportunity to advance my
17 skills and play soccer, and it ultimately gave me my
18 fifth grade teacher, Ms. Nelson.

19 I chose to embrace it. This helped my
20 transition into seventh grade this fall. While here
21 at Spencer Middle School, I helped start a city
22 council and bonded with my new teachers and
23 classmates.

24 While places like Walton and Geary are

1 dear to our hearts, we will never forget the memories
2 and the lessons we have learned.

3 while I miss my friends from Walton, I
4 look forward to helping them bridge the gap with my
5 new friends here at Spencer next year if the
6 consolidation occurs.

7 In closing, I am reminded of something a
8 wise person once said. Kids are more resilient than
9 adults.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Hattie
12 Perkins followed by Nona Perkins.

13 MS. HATTIE PERKINS: Hi. My name is Hattie
14 Perkins, and I'm in the fifth grade at Walton. All
15 year, I have been worrying about our school being shut
16 down, and I've been thinking about a few things.

17 Like will I go to school with my friends
18 next year, or how is it going to be for my little
19 brothers, and it really worries me to think about all
20 the little kids and how it's going to be for them.

21 First of all, how is the bus ride going
22 to be for the other kids. How long is it going to be?
23 Say you live very close to Walton, and are trying to
24 go to Spencer. That is about a one-hour bus ride, and

1 that is very boring.

2 I'm sure there are going to be so many
3 kids squished onto one bus, and maybe three to a seat,
4 and that is really dangerous.

5 Second, I would like to talk about
6 something different from the schools. My parents take
7 turns going to these useless meetings. Why do I call
8 them useless? Because every time my parents come home
9 from these Board meetings, they are upset, not only
10 because of the way you act, and this is what everyone
11 is saying, especially the people fighting for our
12 schools, and that is so frustrating.

13 If you have already decided that you are
14 closing the schools, everybody should not be here
15 tonight.

16 Please keep Walton and Geary. My school
17 means the world to me.

18 Thank you for your time.

19 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Nona
20 Perkins followed by Ben Shamblin.

21 MS. NONA PERKINS: Hello. I am Nona Perkins.
22 I think we are all well-acquainted by now.

23 But I am a parent with three kids at
24 Walton. I worked in the county as a teacher for

1 almost ten years, and most importantly, lately I've
2 been an advocate for all those in Roane County,
3 especially those who can't come here to speak out or
4 who are afraid to speak out about consolidation.

5 So, first, I have a question, and it's
6 been answered, but I would like some more
7 clarification. It's on the topic of transfers. So,
8 my question is, will there be a regular transfer prior
9 to when new positions are created if consolidation
10 happens?

11 So for example, let's say there are five
12 fifth grade teachers in the county. The one at
13 Walton, the one at Geary are no longer going to be
14 there because of consolidation.

15 My question is, will one of those fifth
16 grade teachers, if they have more seniority than say
17 the other there at Spencer Elementary, move into one
18 of those positions before new positions are created?
19 That is my specific question. How would that work?

20 Now, what I would like to talk about this
21 evening is about how the school consolidation will
22 negatively impact the students in our county.

23 The impact statement doesn't really cover
24 this. So I need to say this. Some of these things

1 have been brought up, but I think we need a reminder,
2 especially before the vote happens on Thursday.

3 So my first point is, I don't know if you
4 know this or not, but the poverty rate in Roane County
5 is over 20 percent, and for ages under 18, it's around
6 32 percent.

7 So think about all the students in Roane
8 County that are under 18 and mostly the poverty rate
9 is between 20 and 30 percent.

10 Now I've done a lot of research on the
11 topic, and I found several articles that talk about
12 what happens to impoverished children in various
13 schools, and what happens to them when schools are
14 consolidated.

15 So I'm just going to tell you a few of
16 the things I've found.

17 Most of these relate to students and
18 poverty, which amount to about 20 to 30 percent of our
19 student population.

20 Achievement gaps were made in poverty,
21 race and gender in school widened in larger schools.
22 That means those gaps get bigger. So the kids who
23 come from a not in-poverty home and kids who have
24 poverty in their home, the gap is wider in

1 achievement.

2 Students from impoverished families have
3 reduced opportunities to participate in
4 extracurricular activities due to increased
5 competition or limited costs and transportation
6 challenges.

7 We've been over that we might have an
8 activity bus, but what about those limited spots? We
9 are talking three basketball teams. We're trying to
10 make -- that's going to limit the spots for those kids
11 who might be able to show us something other than what
12 they got in the classroom.

13 School closures create a loss in
14 community engagement by producing opportunities for
15 families to participate in school governments,
16 volunteer, visit classrooms and attend parent/teacher
17 conferences, which in turn, creates very restricted
18 involvement in their child's education.

19 So I know that children have all the
20 activities, grandparents' day, Veteran's Day, all
21 those things, but think about the parent who works in
22 Charleston who won't be able to take off two hours to
23 drive all the way here for an activity and then all
24 the way back, or their parents don't have

1 transportation at all.

2 Consolidation disproportionately affects
3 low morale for minority communities, meaning that the
4 low socio-population for genders.

5 You've probably heard this before, but
6 (inaudible) brings significant drops in math and
7 reading scores after school closures, as well as
8 lowering standardized test scores.

9 Students displaced by school closures
10 show a 15 percent increase in disciplinary action,
11 including school suspensions.

12 One study found that students are absent
13 for 1.8 percent more school days after consolidation.
14 I've done the math. Out of 180 school days, that's
15 more than three more missed school days. So if a kid
16 missed five days before consolidation, they are likely
17 to miss eight after consolidation.

18 So at the meeting this Thursday, I really
19 want you to consider that 20 to 30 percent of our
20 students, and if you haven't had a chance yet, maybe
21 take the bus drive or take your own vehicle and go out
22 Ciss Run or Viewig and just see where those people
23 live and how they live.

24 Thank you.

1 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Ben
2 Shamblin, followed by Justin Shears.

3 MR. BEN SHAMBLIN: Good evening. I will
4 point out again, I've only got five minutes. I've got
5 more stuff to talk about.

6 It's going to be devastating to the
7 community by doing this. I've talked to Geary about
8 purchasing the school to keep it open. Then to be
9 leased out by Chad Perkins. He was wanting -- he
10 already had plans to purchase Walton and Geary.

11 Dennis came by the shop today to talk to
12 me. He came up with a plan, with an idea. His idea
13 was us purchase it, I'll partner with him, whatever we
14 need to do. Is keep the schools open in K through 3.

15 The idea of K through 5 that way it
16 splits the elementary up. If we are going to
17 consolidate, that's one way to keep the two schools
18 there for the kids.

19 If we purchase this, the idea is lease it
20 back to the school system for nothing. So we have
21 schools at both locations in the southern end of the
22 county, and we would keep the children off the bus for
23 a long period of time.

24 Like Nona said, you need to drive it.

1 It's a long way for those families to come out.

2 So that idea, his idea was that the
3 school system would still supply teachers at both
4 schools and the bus transportation for the kids.

5 This would ensure that both ends of the
6 county would still be open.

7 We all want our county to grow from one
8 end to the other. If you get rid of two schools, you
9 are killing the southern end of the county.

10 When my brother and I first started
11 business in our end of the county, we watched it grow.
12 If you do that, you keep getting older people moving
13 in, and younger people moving out, you are never
14 successful and make your county grow and prosper.

15 I know we have a financial problem in
16 this county but one way to overcome it is trust the
17 numbers like this. Sell us the schools. We will be a
18 nonprofit organization, set them up where the children
19 would still have a place to learn, and they would
20 still have their homes.

21 I've sat here and heard a lot of people
22 talking. I kind of feel like a lot of you just gave
23 up to try to keep the two schools open. Don't think
24 that.

1 So you got to keep up the fight. You
2 want everybody to work together. You want your kids
3 to succeed. I don't want my kid not to succeed and
4 neither do the rest of your all's children as well.

5 I love this county. I went to school
6 here. As a matter of fact, once I decided to make a
7 business, I kept it right here in the county. It's
8 frustrating when you are talking consolidation, and I
9 know every one of you all pay taxes. I'm not saying
10 nothing about that, but when you go into business, you
11 pay taxes, you really get mad about stuff like this.

12 So we are always trying to save money,
13 but consider the school purchase as we talked about.
14 I know we haven't had much time to talk about it, but
15 we could have K through 5, that's the elementary.
16 Then you have the middle school, which would be
17 separate. So think about that idea. That would save
18 you so much more than you would think in terms of the
19 numbers.

20 It would help. I do know Mr. Garner
21 talks about cuts in bus routes. Keep this in mind for
22 your plans. I'd say you might be looking at more
23 driving than you think if you start cutting bus
24 routes. That would be a lot of driving. I bet you

1 lose more than what you are going to cut, and then you
2 will be looking for drivers, and you are going to be
3 back in the same boat than you are going to be in
4 before long.

5 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next is Justin Shears,
6 followed by JuliAnna Penfold.

7 MR. JUSTIN SHEARS: Good evening, everyone.
8 I'm Justin Shears. I don't have a whole lot that I
9 put together for this evening, but something has just
10 been on my mind, and I'm hoping to get some
11 clarification, and if I go back and ask some of the
12 questions again, that didn't get answered at like the
13 last three times.

14 we've come into these buildings every
15 single meeting, every single hearing, and every single
16 time we've said the number one priority is the kids
17 and giving the kids the best education we can possibly
18 give them.

19 But what I haven't heard is anything that
20 we've done developing this plan to actually evaluate
21 how this is going to affect the kids.

22 Did we consult any behavioral health
23 specialist? Did we consult any mental health
24 specialist? Any health care providers here? Did we

1 talk to anybody?

2 Because in reality, this plan that
3 somebody was out of state for a long time, come back
4 home? It's going back in time.

5 We are supposed to be taking steps
6 forward and looking forward to our future, the future
7 leaders of this county, and that's our kids, and all
8 we are doing is putting more obstacles in front of
9 them.

10 It's not going to work. We're literally
11 taking a step back in time, and I said it, you know,
12 the other night at Spencer Elementary School, it has
13 absolutely nothing to do with us having any doubt that
14 any of the staff members love our kids.

15 What it's about is the fact that this
16 plan isn't a level playing field. These kids are
17 already a step back because they have to travel all
18 the way out here for most of them, and now they are
19 going to have to do that for 14 years.

20 There is a very big difference between a
21 kid that walks into school, that maybe even have a 30-
22 minute trip to school, versus a kid that has to leave
23 their house two hours before school starts and gets
24 home two hours after the school ends.

1 Our kids are not going to walk into these
2 schools on a level playing field with the kids at
3 Spencer, and that's the problem.

4 I understand that everybody has got the
5 best intentions, but again, I haven't heard -- I've
6 heard it said that that's the number one priority, but
7 I haven't heard a single thing, I haven't found a
8 single thing in the Impact Statement that says we
9 actually did anything to evaluate how this is going to
10 affect the kids.

11 In my opinion, that's wrong. You know,
12 last meeting I asked if all the administrators could
13 get up and actually look us in the face and say that
14 all kids in this county are going to receive a fair
15 and equitable education?

16 There was no response to that.

17 But what I can guarantee you is this is
18 not a level playing field. You are taking a lot of
19 kids that are already disadvantaged, and you are
20 disproportionately disadvantaging them again.

21 It's not -- like I said, every time we
22 get together, we talk it out in segments, these little
23 communities. We normally have 200 students and this
24 and that, but when you add them altogether, and

1 especially our kids, once you include the high school,
2 the southern end of the county makes up 50 percent of
3 the kids in this county, and we're just putting
4 obstacles in front of them, and we think that is going
5 to provide for the kids.

6 So I would ask, what have we done to
7 actually evaluate this? I've seen the financial
8 statements, you know, it basically seems like it is
9 virtually solely a financial evaluation.

10 That's the problem. The Board does not
11 have the information they need to make this decision,
12 and that's the number one problem with this plan.
13 They are doing it blind.

14 I think we know all the answers to these
15 questions. We just don't want to say them.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have JuliAnna
18 Penfold, followed by Andrea Hays.

19 MS. JULIANNA PENFOLD: Good afternoon. My
20 name is JuliAnna Penfold. I just want to say that
21 when we talk about consolidation, Roane County for the
22 past 50 years has gone through a lot of transformation
23 and consolidations.

24 we had walton, two schools went into one

1 school, right? The elementary school that closed
2 down, it closed down and they moved to Walton.

3 Then you had three schools at Geary
4 Elementary that was closed down and went to Geary
5 Elementary.

6 Then you have your Spencer Schools, and
7 your Spencer Schools have actually gone through
8 several consolidations that most people don't even
9 realize.

10 First off was, I remember when I was in
11 fourth grade, Clover closing down, and we had an
12 influx of students that came into our school, and
13 Spencer Elementary has had over 600 students into the
14 building before. So it can withstand the student
15 growth. Also we have Reedy. Before Reedy actually
16 closed down, I remember, that we actually had students
17 in seventh and eighth grade came from Reedy into the
18 school to start that process.

19 So even before that, there was the fifth
20 grade and then sixth grade and the closure.

21 So the Spencer schools have actually gone
22 through a lot of transformations through
23 consolidations, and also through junior high schools,
24 and actually the buildings at Spencer High to help

1 move some students out of that area.

2 We never quite got to go to the old
3 junior high school because they always built on. So,
4 once again, there have been consolidations in both of
5 those schools.

6 Now, with that being said, have there
7 always been people who have always been against it?
8 Of course, because people have a passion about their
9 areas.

10 What they need to remember is, that
11 passion is good, but also consolidation can be for the
12 better because we already have a unified curriculum,
13 because I have had the opportunity and honor to
14 actually be at every single school and teaching every
15 possible grade in Roane County.

16 I was a substitute, then a long-term
17 substitute at Walton for like ten years. I was at
18 Walton for a very long time. Then went to Spencer. I
19 had the opportunity to work here.

20 So I was at the high school, but I really
21 wasn't at the high school, if that makes sense, and
22 then I moved back to Spencer, and I have to say that
23 we are blessed with having wonderful faculty all over
24 the county, but also have the capability to have

1 consolidated education. Meaning that if you go to
2 eighth grade POA, you are doing to same thing across
3 the board.

4 If you are going into fourth grade, it's
5 the same curriculum across the board. It is the same
6 curriculum being taught across the board so no student
7 actually is at a disadvantage and they are exposed to
8 the same education as their other peers at other
9 schools.

10 So that's one thing to remember that
11 Spencer Elementary can have over 600 students, as well
12 as Spencer Middle School.

13 Yes, it has the problem about the morning
14 and evening transportation drop-off and delivery, but
15 it's something that can be worked on, and they do a
16 great job of trying to manage that beast. It's a
17 beast every morning and evening.

18 But one thing you have to remember is
19 that, it hasn't been very long for the elementary
20 schools to consolidate, but you know, Geary does not
21 have a high school. They've always come into Spencer
22 to attend Roane County High School.

23 So if you think about it, the group of
24 students that actually come into the transformation

1 and have dealt with those consolidations have been the
2 students and yet the teachers are always there
3 welcoming with open arms, and to make sure that the
4 students have the best type of quality education, and
5 as Mr. Rector pointed out before, students are more
6 resilient than adults, and he is proof of that.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Andrea
9 Hays, followed by Gabe Boggs.

10 MS. ANDREA HAYS: Good evening. My name is
11 Andrea Hays. I rushed to get here in time to sign and
12 I left what I was going to say on my printer, so I
13 will try to remember my notes.

14 I just want to say I'm proud to live in
15 Roane County, and I am proud that I am an educator
16 here with many teachers who are in many buildings, and
17 I've worked with many of them.

18 I worked at Walton for 15 or 17 years of
19 teaching, and I do consider that home. I live there.
20 My kids live there. I'm also proud that I went to
21 Roane County High School. I am a Roane countian, and
22 all of this is just devastating.

23 I want to say thank you for the chance to
24 have this question and answer session. I know this is

1 because this is what we have to do for consolidation.
2 I know this is a requirement, but I know if things
3 continue, we continue to have sessions like this,
4 questions and answers sessions like every quarter,
5 because the dialogue between the Board and the
6 community is really important.

7 I know a lot of times, we can go to Board
8 meetings and have questions because of the rules the
9 way things are, it's hard to have this dialogue. This
10 is important.

11 So I hope that this continues, regardless
12 of what the decision is.

13 I was unable to attend last week's
14 session, but I tried really hard to listen as much as
15 I possibly could, so some of these questions might be
16 repetitive.

17 If consolidation happens, is there a plan
18 for renaming the consolidated schools? On the
19 staffing situation, this question was kind of already
20 asked, but I'm going to ask it again because I've been
21 a teacher and I know how important seniority is, and
22 you work really hard to build that up.

23 So my question is, and I swear Ms.
24 Perkins and I did not talk about this, but with the

1 changes, if a teacher at Walton has let's say 20
2 years' teaching experience in the county, seniority,
3 and a teacher, and their job because of the
4 consolidation is, you know, displaced, would they bump
5 a teacher at one of the consolidated schools that has
6 10 years? A specific example -- that is my question.
7 Whenever I was a young teacher, I really wanted that,
8 so I know that that is important.

9 Teachers -- are plans in place for
10 staffing if the consolidation happens? Is there a
11 plan to support them?

12 Teachers and staff have been supported in
13 a well-thought out plan must be in place well before
14 the first days of school. We have to support our
15 teachers and staff. They are the backbone of our
16 system.

17 The decisions that you all make, they go
18 with it, and they do the best they can. We have to
19 support them.

20 What other costs would be associated with
21 consolidation? I know they will require some costs,
22 but down the road are you looking at improvements that
23 needs to be made and what are the costs associated
24 with those? For any of these schools.

1 I know some valid points were brought up
2 about different things, but what other costs might be
3 associated with consolidation that were not part of
4 the plan?

5 In closing, again I thank you for this
6 opportunity. I do hope that you continue regardless
7 of what is decided, and I hope that when you make your
8 decision on Thursday, you'll make the decision of
9 what's best for all students in Roane County.

10 I appreciate you all, and I do pray for
11 you. So, thank you.

12 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Gabe
13 Boggs, followed by Rachel Hays.

14 MR. GABE BOGGS: Good evening. I don't
15 really have anything prepared at all. First of all,
16 thanks for having us, Ms. Claypool. This is my first
17 time on the new side, and congratulations to the
18 Yellow Jackets winning the WVAC champions.

19 So we need to be serious. I know we had
20 a financial state of emergency in July, and one week,
21 opening up the conversations to the public.

22 Mr. Shamblin just kind of laid it -- kind
23 of brought that up. Wonder why they didn't talk to
24 the community before now? I really don't understand

1 it. I think that's a good question. You guys can ask
2 yourselves.

3 I know we've done a lot of yelling and
4 different things, but we truly care about the kids. I
5 would have used every available resource.

6 The reason we are here was we overspent
7 because we had too many teachers this whole time, but
8 our test scores, you know, we've had trouble at
9 different times, different things.

10 We know we need a certain amount of
11 teachers. The State-aid formula doesn't give us what
12 we need, so we close schools in the State of West
13 Virginia in the last 10 years, I think.

14 Obviously, you guys are responsible for
15 this, whatever this is, and vote yes, or you can vote
16 no, and the State comes in, probably appoints a new
17 superintendent, which is going on in the rest of the
18 counties right now.

19 Even the State can't fix it, right? I
20 mean, they can fire the ones that they are appointing
21 to appoint new ones. It's all a mess. I do feel bad
22 for all of us.

23 I don't feel bad -- in a way, for you
24 guys it's worse than the children that still are going

1 to end up being able to go to school.

2 In January, you guys did a self-
3 appraisal. I know we were under a different
4 superintendent, but it talks about if we have enough
5 information to make a decision. I don't have it
6 prepared in front of me, actually I do, but I think
7 she said Question 11, was -- as a Board member, I have
8 necessary information to make decisions about issues.

9 Zero of the five strongly agreed, two
10 agreed, three disagreed, and zero strongly disagreed.

11 Question 21 specifically, the
12 relationship between the Board and the Superintendent
13 is one of mutual respect, open communication, trust
14 and confidence.

15 One strongly agreed, two agreed and two
16 disagreed.

17 I literally have no point. It's just
18 everything you guys do is public. You should act that
19 way. You should remain emotionless when people are
20 talking. Act as professionals.

21 It's all act professional, I guess. If
22 we are going to sit through this crap on this side and
23 know that we've got all the checked boxes, at least
24 act like it.

1 I do appreciate, and I understand that
2 you are all in a mess. So many times in my life, I
3 thought I'd do my best to find out who I could be, and
4 I hope you guys think about that. If you are given a
5 template, when you fill it out, to the bare minimum I
6 hope you do your best.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next is Rachel Hays,
9 followed by Lisa Messineo.

10 MS. RACHEL HAYS: Good evening, everybody.
11 My name is Rachel Hays, and I'm a parent of a child
12 who attends Walton Elementary Middle School. I'm sure
13 you guys are all quite familiar with that by now.

14 The calculation you are basing this on is
15 widely accepted by the State Department as sufficient
16 to calculate the figures in this Impact Statement.
17 They are not sufficient to create an accurate picture
18 of the situation this county faces.

19 The whole set of data has been talked
20 about ad nauseum at this point. So my question for
21 you is, what are you going to do about that?

22 Is it a priority of the Board to make
23 sure that the supporting documentation needed creates
24 a clear picture of the students in the communities

1 affected by this closure and consolidation, or is it
2 your priority to just stick with what you have
3 whatever your motivation for that may be?

4 Even though the commutes for the buses
5 could be an hour or less for this consolidation, which
6 I think we will have commutes of over an hour, but
7 anyways, the total amount the child must travel from
8 home still remains.

9 I am going to quote to you a recent study
10 found that a one-minute increase in school commute
11 time is associated by a 1.3 minute reduction of sleep,
12 meaning that if a given student had to commute 15
13 minutes longer than another student, they would be
14 sleeping almost 20 minutes less on average.

15 The same study also found that students
16 with shorter commutes got more exercise relative to
17 those with longer commutes.

18 Given that sleep and exercise have well-
19 established relationships to educational outcomes,
20 students with longer commutes may face greater
21 academic over-all health challenges as a result of
22 their longer commute.

23 Another analysis of bus travelling
24 students referring to absenteeism and test scores were

1 worse for students with commutes over 45 minutes
2 relative to their peers with shorter commutes.

3 We are having so many discussions about
4 how we can improve test scores and learning in our
5 classrooms, but you are attempting to address the
6 symptom of the underlying problem with intervention
7 during and after school while simultaneously
8 considering the decision will only further undercut
9 the overall goal of reaching these children and
10 meeting their educational needs.

11 will the interventions you provide
12 compensate for the children in the school structure?
13 I have my doubts.

14 I've also heard a lot about how
15 consolidation could mean new and increased
16 opportunities for students. Exactly what
17 opportunities are you referring to?

18 Academic opportunities? Because if you
19 use the data the State has shown us, we are performing
20 ahead or in-line with most of their counterparts in
21 the county already.

22 Are we talking about athletic
23 opportunities? Because I'm quite sure that in
24 children in their pre-teens will certainly allow for

1 more children play a sport and participate as a whole
2 rather than only vying for spots on one team. So who
3 exactly does this benefit?

4 I've also heard a narrative posed
5 multiple times recently accusing Walton and Geary of
6 siphoning funds and resources.

7 It's my understanding, however, that
8 money is allocated to the county per student in the
9 county, not for a student at a school.

10 The siphoning fund theory and by those
11 standards you could say the same thing about Roane
12 County High School.

13 The narrative is a stretch at best. Yes,
14 the children are generally resilient, and yes, most of
15 them will come out of this by an amazing flourish, but
16 then there are those who will not, and those children
17 matter just as much as any of the others.

18 You cannot say you are making this
19 decision for what is best for all students, when this
20 decision is not best for any students.

21 I want to be clear. I don't think any
22 decision of any person on this panel, and I've
23 struggled with this a lot, would be advocating for my
24 child and others, while also feeling a certain amount

1 of empathy for all of you sitting up here.

2 I mean, at the very end of the day we are
3 all human. We all make human mistakes. We make them
4 daily. Unfortunately, your decisions are being
5 scrutinized by everyone right now, but that is because
6 you hold the educational future of our most absolute
7 precious resource, our children, in your hands.

8 I will absolutely hold you to the highest
9 standard, and I would expect if our roles were
10 reversed, you would do the same to me.

11 Thank you.

12 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Lisa
13 Messineo, followed by Joe Messineo.

14 MS. LISA MESSINEO: Yes. I am Lisa Messineo.
15 My comments will be for you because I'm looking at
16 this in terms of a summary. I still feel that the
17 lack of a complete Impact Statement that addresses the
18 impact on the children, on the communities, on the
19 economic future of Roane County. It's not in our
20 impact statement but it should be, and I feel that it
21 is just -- I understand the State gave you a template.
22 I get it, but that should be the minimum not the end
23 result.

24 I still feel that we deserve a complete

1 Impact Statement, and I think that the Board should
2 insist upon that.

3 Ms. Stellato, you are a very bright
4 woman, and I don't have any doubt that you can
5 accomplish that.

6 The other thing is, besides the Impact
7 Statement -- well, I feel very strongly obviously
8 about the transportation situation. No child should
9 have to be on a bus for more than an hour.

10 I am very attracted to the idea of
11 looking especially at the younger children, and trying
12 to prevent making those younger children go through
13 such an extended commute. If there is any hope in
14 that.

15 The other thing is, we haven't really
16 explored alternatives. I mean, I understand that
17 school consolidation is the way we can get the biggest
18 bang for our buck. One and done.

19 And that any other alternative is going
20 to be messy and complicated, and requires some
21 creative and innovative thinking. But again, I think
22 that the people that Ms. Stellato has working with her
23 are capable of this, and maybe you can consider some
24 of these particular alternatives, or maybe pieces of

1 them, and you look at that piece, and you go oh, that
2 doesn't save enough money, and it gets cast aside.

3 You know, this other piece, that piece
4 could save or that doesn't save enough money. But if
5 you put them altogether, let's try to be creative and
6 see if there is a way to minimize this impact, mostly
7 on our students, especially the young students.

8 I think that crowding the number of
9 students at Spencer Elementary, that you intend to, is
10 just too much. Could you at least think about moving
11 fifth grade to the middle school?

12 I think the middle school has room,
13 especially in my mind, to have all of the young
14 children, you know, coming up here.

15 Overcrowding in schools and in classrooms
16 has the most negative effect on the youngest ages, and
17 I think we really need to concentrate on that, as well
18 as these young children, and I think it's almost
19 creating extra struggles, and I think it is a burden
20 upon us to try to be creative for them.

21 I think the Board should have been
22 presented with some alternative ideas, and maybe you
23 have been. I don't know. But I think that being
24 transparent about that would be helpful if we are all

1 to get on the same page.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our last speaker will
4 be Joe Messineo.

5 MR. JOE MESSINEO: Good evening. I am the
6 third one from the Messineo family, so you are going
7 to get one more, okay?

8 This is important. When I went to the
9 first meeting in Walton, I parked my truck and closed
10 the door and turned around and looked up, what do you
11 think I saw? School of excellence, and I said darn.
12 Don't tell me they are trying to close another school
13 of excellence in Roane County.

14 We've already closed one in Reedy. Then
15 I found out that Geary was in jeopardy also.

16 This is to the Board. You all know how
17 to say no, don't you? I do. I'm worried about the
18 State Board of Education. I'm worried about the
19 Legislature. Okay?

20 This funding formula they have is so
21 antiquated for rural counties, like Roane County.
22 It's got to be changed. Who is moving in here? Who's
23 moving into these rural counties with no jobs, because
24 it's old people like me. They are not working. They

1 are not bringing their kids with them to Roane County.

2 Funding, and you take that funding and
3 you start distributing it to private schools, okay,
4 I've got no problem with private schools. I was
5 raised in a private school, I have no problem at all.
6 My mom and dad paid for it, for our whole family.
7 There were five of us.

8 when it takes away from public schools,
9 it starts to crumble their education, in every state
10 in the country.

11 Please, please, Board of Education
12 members, say no. Don't worry about your jobs, because
13 I've got a funny feeling, you are not going to be here
14 for very long anyway if the State comes into it.

15 Think about the kids. Think about those
16 kids, and giving them the best education is at Walton
17 and Geary, not Spencer Middle School. I'm not saying
18 that school doesn't have a good staff. I've got
19 nothing against them. But when you put 299 kids
20 together, classrooms of 25 kids, what happens? what
21 happens?

22 I am not going to speak anymore about
23 what's going on behind the scenes, I don't know. It
24 will come out eventually. I want to say one more

1 thing, if you have not read it, what I call Cotton
2 Tree Trail books, before you make a decision, Board of
3 Education, get on that bus and ride it, and see what
4 those kids are going to be facing.

5 Jerry, that's no reflection on you. I
6 know you've got your job to do, and Michelle, you've
7 got a job to do, too, and I can appreciate that.

8 But I'm asking all of you, let's stand
9 up, Roane County. Let's keep these kids educated and
10 make good people out of them.

11 Thank you very much.

12 MR. MACE: That concludes the speakers for
13 tonight's hearing. Ms. Stellato, we will be in recess
14 for you and your team to discuss the questions. We
15 will be in recess for 20 minutes. We will be back
16 from the recess at 6:37.

17 (WHEREUPON, the meeting was
18 In recess at 6:17 p.m., after
19 which reconvened at 6:37 p.m.)

20 MR. MACE: We will call the meeting back to
21 order. Ms. Stellatto, we will turn this over to you.
22 Ms. Stellato, is your team ready?

23 MS. STELLATO: Yes.

24 MR. MACE: We will call the meeting back to

1 order. Ms. Stellato?

2 MS. STELLATO: Okay. Again, as I always
3 start out, our team before us, we have tried to
4 capture everything, and hopefully we did that
5 accurately. We will do our best.

6 I want to stop and think about all the
7 questions. One of the things that I thought shocking
8 about this evening is that there was a lot of
9 questions about the process arriving at this Impact
10 Statement which we've talked about other counties and
11 that this does not at all capture the impact of an
12 actual school closure and consolidation.

13 One way I can try to explain this in a
14 way that we can all -- and someone came up with the
15 idea that it's kind of like filling out your income
16 tax form. There are questions that we have to ask.
17 There are boxes that we have to check. We are trying
18 to get a full picture of what you have -- what your
19 pictures looks like, but nonetheless, it is a process
20 that we all must engage in as required by policies and
21 procedures.

22 So we adopt that through the process of
23 talking with the State Department officials about the
24 experience that we've had here in addressing the fact

1 that it is called an Impact Statement, and it doesn't
2 at all capture the essence of what happens to the
3 communities and as to the children.

4 But it does, in fact, as required by the
5 policies of 6204, which is the process, and I wanted
6 to commend the children tonight for having the courage
7 to talk. Hattie said something about, and I can't
8 remember exactly, so I wanted to say but we can circle
9 back to this tomorrow, but this is democracy in a way
10 and the process that we get to engage in dialogue, and
11 be able to participate.

12 I'm glad that they are getting involved
13 in this, and I'm glad that they are getting to
14 participate because we don't usually get this back and
15 forth, and there's time for people to speak and a time
16 for us to speak and answer those.

17 I really wanted to say I am glad that
18 they are getting to see that there are processes in
19 our state and in our world that allow us to have
20 collective discords when we don't agree with things or
21 when things aren't going the way we think they should
22 go, but there are processes in place for us to have
23 the opportunities to come together and to discuss
24 things, and we are able to continue this moving

1 forward.

2 I'm going to start going down the list of
3 questions, and some of the ones that I feel kind of a
4 direct response. So I've ask Ms. Tanner to be
5 prepared to kind of first talk about the process.

6 MS. TANNER: Okay. So under West Virginia
7 Code that covers in cases of consolidation is §18A-4-
8 8(f). So that's the Code that you can look at.

9 That is the West Virginia Code, and so
10 what that clearly states is that if there would be a
11 closure or consolidation, each individual person will
12 get a vote, each service personnel will be get a vote.

13 The faculty senate votes will be tallied.
14 The service personnel votes will be tallied. Their
15 votes will be determined, so let's say from Spencer
16 Middle, we are going to need one extra teacher.

17 So you would get to control their
18 success. We invite you -- the teachers from Walton
19 and Geary get first choice or first pick of these new
20 positions created due to the influx.

21 So let's say that there's one position.
22 That means that we are going to guarantee Geary and
23 Walton, whomever has the highest seniority and
24 certification would have first pick of that job.

1 Everyone else files under the regular
2 transfer sheets.

3 So if one person at Walton has 22 years,
4 and we have one person at Geary that has 10 years,
5 that means that person at Walton would get that
6 position, but that person on Geary would get their
7 seniority -- so they would bump someone else who has
8 less than 10 years. So they could bump that person.
9 It goes by the regular seniority rules.

10 So the decision is to either to allow
11 Geary and Walton to have first priority to those new
12 jobs created due to the influx of students coming to
13 their schools.

14 If the county vote is no, we don't go
15 that way. Then we just do the regular transfers. So
16 if we need five teachers for sixth grade at Spencer
17 Middle, then we go through regular transfers.

18 MR. GARNER: There was a question about at
19 Spencer Middle School, would we try to add an access
20 road. Well, there are two different thoughts on how
21 that could be accomplished. One would be to build an
22 access road to go basically through the playground we
23 have and go up and over and come out at Walton area.

24 The other way is any other way in, we

1 would need a bridge coming off of Route 36. A bridge
2 is definitely going to be well more than \$1.4 million,
3 no doubt about it. So it will be a high cost. DOH
4 would have to be involved and everything.

5 So I cannot give you a number right off
6 the top of my head. We would have to talk to DOH and
7 see what-all they would need to come up with any type
8 of calculation on that. That would be a
9 transportation issue.

10 The question was asked what bus travel
11 are we talking about. I can't tell how long the bus
12 would travel, how long the kids are on there. I have
13 not determined whether there is going to be
14 (inaudible). I have no clue what the situation is at
15 the house.

16 We had Hattie ask how long the bus ride
17 would be. Would the bus be crowded. How many kids
18 would be on it in a seat.

19 A typical bus for a Roane County school
20 will hold 51 students, two to a seat, with the last
21 one being the back seat having only one. They are
22 rated at 77 passengers, that is three to a seat, with
23 the back seat having 2.

24 It is hard once you get into middle

1 school and high school level, to get three to a seat.

2 So can we go a little bit above 51? Yes.

3 Can we go to 77 on a regular bus? No, it would be too
4 crowded.

5 How long would Hattie's ride be? well,
6 if it comes out of Steam Road, and she would be picked
7 on there, unfortunately, all the buses would have to
8 go to the elementary school first. So they would go
9 there first. Her bus ride, 20 minutes maybe, compared
10 to the other students could be riding for about an
11 hour. I understand they are not going to like that at
12 all, and I am really sorry.

13 So the only thing to do to compensate for
14 that is to go back routes, or not have some
15 altogether.

16 Improvement costs, someone asked the
17 question, I believe it was Andrea, about improvement
18 costs.

19 Back in 2020, when we did the ten-year
20 facilities plan, and for Spencer Elementary School, it
21 was \$3.5 million that was calculated in 2020-dollars
22 to do upgrades to the windows, doors and interior
23 things, including plumbing, drywall and interior walls
24 and doors.

1 So those are things that the ten-year
2 plan were to be done, as long as funding, and for us,
3 to have any type of matching money with the School
4 Building Authority, we will not have that anytime
5 soon.

6 Spencer Middle School, this building
7 here, it wasn't even part of the ten-year facilities
8 plan, and now that it is, it's in here. So there are
9 a couple of improvements for this building, and it's
10 scheduled.

11 Roane County High School, in the ten-year
12 facilities plan, there are \$14 million of improvements
13 that need to be done to Roane County High School,
14 interior finishes, plumbing, HVAC upgrades.

15 We did 75 percent of that already, but
16 there is still 25 percent of the building next door
17 the HVAC needs to be upgraded.

18 A lot of the wiring, communication
19 system, interior doors, upgrades of the sprinkler
20 system and kitchen equipment, all those are in the
21 ten-year facilities plan to be upgraded.

22 So, yes, things will be moving along
23 eventually, but again, it's going to be a slow process
24 if the school building authority will have any type of

1 management.

2 Ms. Stellato, that's all I have.

3 MS. STELLATO: Ms. Ash, will you address
4 mental health?

5 MS. ASH: So we have the plans if we
6 consolidate, that's step one. That's what we focused
7 on the most, mostly this whole process. But we want
8 to support the students, the staff and the families
9 whether we consolidate or not in all aspects. That
10 includes mental health or anything else that we need
11 to focus on, whether we consolidate or we don't.

12 Do not doubt, that we are already focused
13 on what happens next. Whether we consolidate or not,
14 that's always been in the back of our minds. We know
15 that it doesn't stop here. There's more to do
16 afterwards, but without a doubt, no matter what the
17 outcome, we will have plans to support our staff, our
18 students and our families in all respects.

19 MS. STELLATO: There was a question asked
20 about renaming and rebranding, and we didn't address
21 that here, but basically what I will say is, there
22 have been rumors that that has already happened. This
23 team has not engaged in any level of rebranding or
24 renaming. Were there individual schools that said oh,

1 we can do this, thinking about the future?

2 Absolutely, but in terms of any potential
3 movement forward, and again, we were cautioned against
4 taking that into the Impact Statement as it would
5 indicate that it was predetermined, and so we don't
6 want to do that.

7 So obviously, depending on what happens
8 on Thursday, we would determine our next steps of what
9 we are going to do to be able to plan for the next
10 steps of that.

11 I want to talk a little bit about the
12 siphoning comment that was made earlier. I don't
13 remember anyone using the word "siphoning," so I need
14 to speak to what I think it might be.

15 So on this, and I don't want to get into
16 a specific numbers with you because I didn't ask about
17 that specifically.

18 Basically, what I think this comment is
19 coming from is that if we only sent, there's 181
20 children allotted to the district for 181 students,
21 it's not enough to sustain the school. So, therefore,
22 we have to take a larger portion of the whole state-
23 aid pot and make sure that we can have adequate levels
24 of teachers and adequate levels of support staff.

1 So I think that might be the comment
2 where that's coming from, but that is basically, in a
3 high-level view, that's what we are saying what the
4 concern would be of building utilization, with the
5 number of children in the building, is not high enough
6 to sustain the operations of the building. That is
7 when it becomes a red flag. It's kind of like the
8 building utilization.

9 Another thing I want to point out, so we
10 talked about, a lot about the -- so when we said the
11 WVDE, the Department of Education hasn't approved the
12 impact statement, but it has to go through them before
13 it ever went for public approval, and the contents, if
14 it were approved by the Department of Education's
15 facilities plan, I forget the actual name of that
16 office.

17 If our Board votes to close and
18 consolidate schools on Thursday, then it goes to the
19 WVDE, the Board of Education, for approval and sign-
20 off, just one point of clarification on that.

21 One question we were asked earlier, a
22 statement was made we know the answers to all these
23 questions, we just don't want to say that. I will
24 agree with that statement in that it's not that we

1 don't want to say them. It's that it's not part of
2 what we are expected in 6204 to address, but the
3 conversations that we are having in our leadership
4 team meetings, and in our view is looking at the next
5 steps, especially given what we know about the outcome
6 of Thursday. So what will we be doing on Friday? We
7 were address all of those next steps.

8 Several of the principals have had influx
9 of teachers and students, not a lot, but several. So
10 they have already had opportunities, and at no point
11 will this county and the leadership that's before you,
12 just look at say we can figure it out.

13 Unfortunately education sometimes, we get
14 the opportunities to do that, but that is not -- we
15 talked a little bit about whether the scenarios would
16 just be building up.

17 We've learned a lot when we moved Spencer
18 Middle, or where the old Spencer High School to the
19 new Spencer, and there are a lot of things we would
20 not want replicated, in the way that we moved the
21 furniture and the way that transition happened.

22 I think we all learned a lot through that
23 process, but again, we have tried very hard not to get
24 ahead of ourselves in this process and holding these m

1 hearings and allowing the public to comment and the
2 public's expectations to form Board's decision on
3 that.

4 A question was asked about why we haven't
5 -- it was kind of put before us tonight about
6 community purchasing and figuring out a way to keep
7 some of the schools in the area.

8 There was a Board meeting, maybe within
9 the last month, I would say, where we talked about the
10 charter school option, and whether there was a
11 nonprofit organization that did present that to the
12 Board, it was very clear that it would take community
13 members acting together.

14 So as I've had the preliminary
15 conversations with the folks involved in that, and we
16 will support them in that. It's a lot of extra work,
17 but if we can figure out what it means helping some of
18 the costs to our students as best we can in those
19 communities, then that's what we do up here, is figure
20 it out, and figure out a way to do that.

21 There were some conversations about that.
22 There was a statement made about looking at other
23 options, and that this would be a one and done. I
24 just want to be clear, this is not a one and done

1 scenario, that closing two schools will solve all our
2 problems.

3 we've been very clear. we do not want
4 that to be the case. I have said this, we do not know
5 what will happen with enrollment. we would have a
6 plan based off data that was frozen on August 23rd,
7 because it's changing every day. Every day it moves a
8 little bit more. It's something we are going to have
9 to constantly be fluid and fluctuating with our plans
10 and how we address those.

11 what I would say is in order to meet the
12 expectations of the State of Emergency, this seems to
13 be the formal procedure for exploring closure and
14 consolidation plans, and other things that we can do
15 and decide to do within the Board, and the leadership
16 team, that do not require formalized processes the way
17 that this -- the closure and consolidation requires, a
18 formalized process to do this.

19 So, as you know, the team will be back
20 together on Friday, and we will be looking at okay,
21 now what? Now what's the next step? what is the next
22 move, because time will be of the essence for us to
23 make decisions and move forward.

24 I was asked to mention about the bus

1 route in hearings, that was quite successful, and it's
2 my understanding that it continues to grow and
3 continues to reduce the overcrowding and things that
4 are happening at that school. I know it's a choice
5 for parents to not ride the bus. It's a choice for
6 parents to bring this kids to school. I get that, and
7 so we hope that allowing the one close to town or
8 close to school, and Ms. Cottrell said at the last --
9 maybe not the last, but at one of the hearings, maybe
10 the last hearings, that she would be willing to
11 entertain having a bus that goes in the opposite
12 direction, as well.

13 Hopefully that helps to mitigate some
14 problem with the traffic issues if we could get more
15 folks to take a chance and try it out. We might be
16 pleasantly surprised.

17 I know several parents have said I've
18 been out of there in 10 minutes. So we wanted to
19 point that out. If you are not participating, give
20 that a try.

21 There was a question what are the costs
22 associated with consolidation that are not part of the
23 plan. Obviously, there is a cost that would occur and
24 we are looking at them, but with rebranding, that

1 would have to be refinished, some of the signs on the
2 buildings would have to be refinished, improve the
3 access to Spencer Elementary may be something that we
4 would have to look at in the future. Loss of
5 enrollment, also something not included in the plan.
6 It's not something that I feel like we have to address
7 today, but there will be costs with consolidation, and
8 we will have to figure that out later on.

9 So there will be associated costs that
10 are not included in the plan, and we acknowledge that,
11 and thank you for bringing our attention to some of
12 these things that we haven't considered before, but
13 those are costs if consolidation actually happens.

14 MR. MACE: That concludes the hearing
15 for Spencer Middle School. I will entertain a motion
16 to adjourn until our next Special Board Meeting. That
17 will be on Tuesday, November the 4th, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
18 That will be at Roane County High School. The next
19 regular Board meeting is Thursday, November the 6th,
20 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

21 Any motion, please? It has been moved
22 and seconded. All those in favor, say aye? Opposed?
23 That motion carries.

24 (Hearing concluded.)

1 **REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE**

2 STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,
3 COUNTY OF ROANE, to wit:

4 I, Donna H. Miller, Notary Public in and for
5 the state of west Virginia, duly commissioned and
6 qualified, do hereby certify that the foregoing Special
7 Meeting of the Board of Education was duly taken by and
8 before me, under the West Virginia Rules of Civil
9 Procedure, at the time and place and for the purpose
10 specified in the caption thereof.

11 I do certify that the said hearing was
12 correctly taken by me by means of the Stenomask; that
13 the same was transcribed by me, and that the said
14 transcript is a true record.

15 I further certify that I am not connected by
16 blood or marriage with any of the parties to this
17 action, am not a relative or employee or attorney or
18 counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or
19 employee of such attorney or counsel, or financially
20 interested in the action, or interested, directly or
21 indirectly, in the matter in controversy.

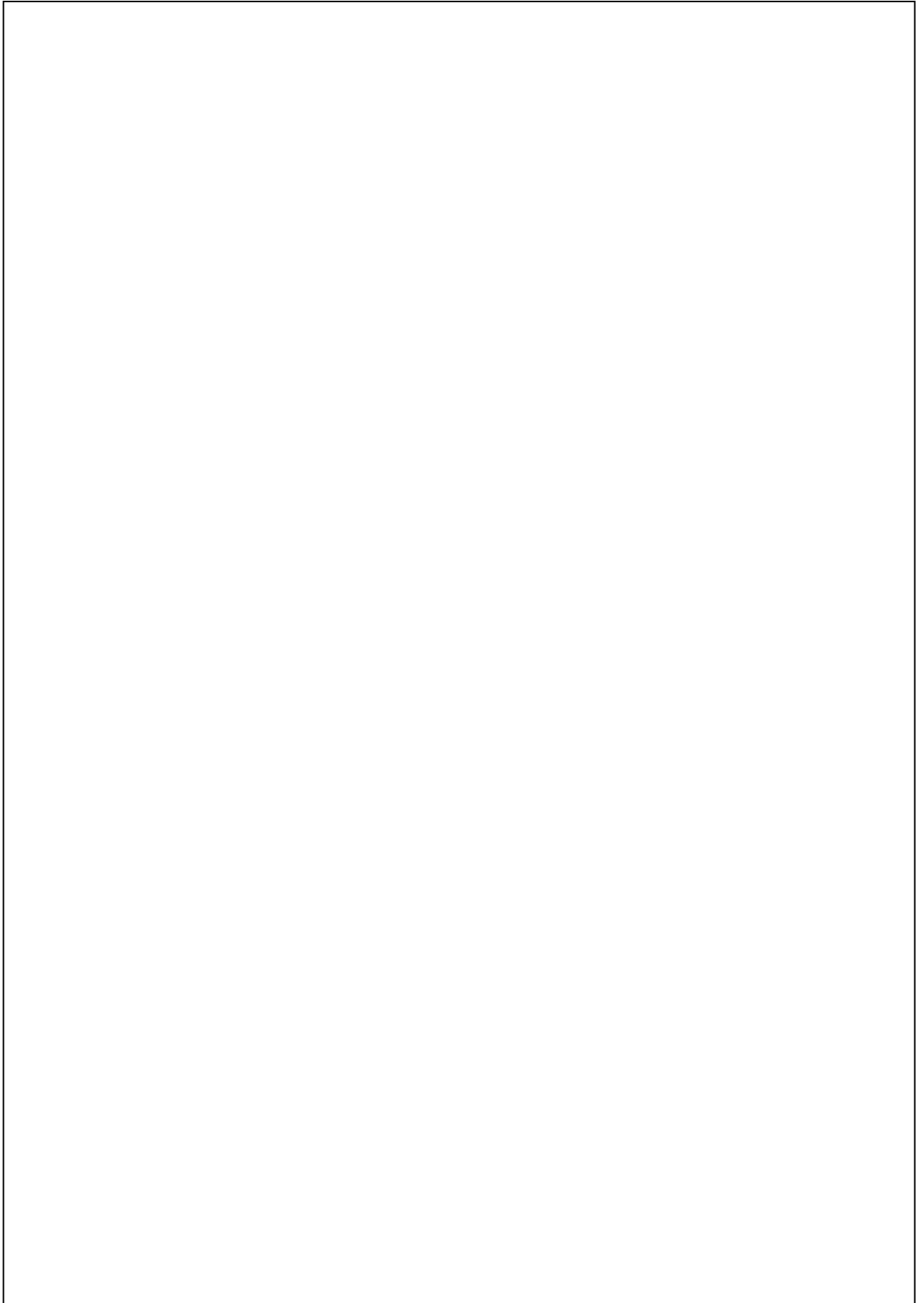
22

1 Given under my hand this 17th day of
2 November, 2025.

3
4
5 -----
6 Donna H. Miller

7 Notary Public

8
9 My commission expires December 12, 2028.



ROANE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA, SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL
IN RE: CLOSURE AND CONSOLIDATION OF GEARY AND WALTON
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL AND CONSOLIDATION
OF K-5 INTO SPENCER ELEMENTARY AND GRADES
6-8 INTO SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND
CONSOLIDATION OF PRE-K INTO ROANE COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL

PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 4, 2025
5:00 PM

ROANE COUNTY SCHOOL
1 RAIDER WAY
SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA

Donna H. Miller,
Court Reporter

1

CAPITOL CITY REPORTING
"PROFESSIONAL STENOMASK FOR THE RECORD"

POST OFFICE BOX 11394, CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA 25339 • (304) 767-4231 FAX (304) 344-9506

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS:

MICHELLE STELLATO
SUPERINTENDENT
CORRIE OTA
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ANN HARDMAN
MICHELLE ASH
LORRA TANNER
AMY COLE
JERRY GARNER

BOARD MEMBERS:

JEFF MACE
DARIS HARPER
DENNS CARPENTER
JAMES MINNEY
EILEEN RICHARDSON

PRINCIPALS:

MEGAN STARCHER
ANNETTE CLAYPOOL
JENNIFER HUNT
SARABETH MONK
SPECIAL ED COORDINATOR
LORI HAMRIC COTTRELL

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SIGNED UP TO SPEAK:

JENNIFER HUNT
JOE RECTOR
GARY KING
CHAD PERKINS
T. C. TORRE
VALERIE MACE
GABE BOGGS
RACHEL HAYS

NOVEMBER 4, 2025

5:00 P.M.

MR. MACE: Good evening. I would like to welcome everyone to the public hearing of the Roane County Board of Education. This public hearing is called to order. My name is Jeff Mace. As President of the Roane County Board of Education, I have determined that at least a quorum of the Board and the Superintendent are present. It is now 5:00 p.m. Registration to address the Board at this public hearing has now closed.

This hearing is convened in accordance with the terms of West Virginia Code §18-5-13a and State Board of Education Policy 6204 in connection with the proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School.

The statute and State Board policy provide that members of the public:

1. have the right to be present;

1 2. have a right to submit statements and
2 testimony; and

3 3. have a right to question school
4 officials.

5 Members of the public, in the order of
6 sign-in, will be allowed to make statements, offer
7 testimony and ask questions of school officials.

8 A total of 8 members of the public have
9 indicated their desire to submit statements or
10 testimony or question school officials. In order to
11 give every speaker a fair opportunity to submit
12 statements and testimony and to question school
13 officials, five minutes have been allotted for each
14 registered speaker. The responses of school officials
15 to questions shall not be included in the time
16 allotted.

17 No member of the public may present more
18 than once. No member of the public may "grant" time
19 to another presenter. Corrie Ota has been designated
20 as the time keeper and will advise when one minute is
21 remaining for each presentation and when time has
22 expired. It is not necessary to consume the total
23 amount of time allotted.

24 As stated in the public notice of this

1 hearing, written statements and materials that were
2 submitted to the Superintendent before October 24,
3 2025 will be given full consideration. That deadline
4 has passed, and written materials may not be submitted
5 during this hearing.

6 All questions shall initially be directed
7 to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may elect
8 to respond to the question or may designate another
9 school official to respond to the question.

10 At the conclusion of all presentations by
11 members of the public, the Superintendent or another
12 member of the administration will be given the
13 opportunity to respond to any information that has
14 been presented by members of the public.

15 Apart from questions directed to the
16 Superintendent and answered by the Superintendent or
17 another member of the administration, there will be no
18 direct debate or dialogue between members of the
19 public and Board members, or members of the public and
20 school officials.

21 Action on the proposed closure of Geary
22 and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the
23 consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer
24 Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle

1 School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from
2 all schools into the space now occupied by the Office
3 of Student Support Services at Roane County High
4 School will be subject of a Board of Education meeting
5 scheduled for November 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. At that
6 time, the Board will conduct all deliberations in open
7 session and a vote will be taken in open session
8 following the Board deliberations.

9 That concludes the hearing statement.
10 Ms. Stellato, will now speak.

11 MS. STELLATO: Good evening members of the
12 Board of Education, staff, parents, students and
13 members of the Roane County community.

14 Thank you for joining us tonight for this
15 important public hearing regarding the proposed
16 closure and consolidation of Walton Elementary Middle
17 School and Geary Elementary Middle School and the
18 consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer
19 Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle
20 School and the consolidation of all pre-K students
21 from all schools into the space now occupied by the
22 Office of Student Support located at Roane County High
23 School.

24 As required by West Virginia Code, §18-5-

1 13a, WVBE policies 6200 and 6204, this hearing and the
2 construction of the required impact statement provides
3 an opportunity to present the rationale for the
4 proposed changes, to share the data and planning that
5 inform this proposal, and most importantly to listen
6 to the concerns, ideas and perspective of our
7 community.

8 On a personal and professional level,
9 none of the members of the leadership team nor the
10 members of the Board of Education wish to be engaged
11 in this process. However, we've been charged to lead
12 the district through this most difficult time. And
13 therefore must undertake this work. We understand the
14 magnitude of the decisions that will be made in the
15 next few days and do not take that responsibility
16 lightly.

17 The purpose of tonight's hearing is not to
18 finalize any decision, but to ensure that all
19 stakeholders understand and engage with:

20 why this consolidation is being
21 considered.

22 How it would affect students, families
23 and staff.

24 what opportunities and challenges this

1 proposal presents for the future of Roane County
2 schools.

3 Over the past several years, Roane County
4 schools has faced a combination of challenges that are
5 increasingly common in rural districts across West
6 Virginia.

7 Declining student enrollment and
8 community population.

9 Rising operational and maintenance costs
10 for our older facilities.

11 Difficulty attracting and retaining
12 certified staff across multiple small campuses.

13 The need to provide equitable access to
14 academic programs, extracurricular activities and
15 student supports across all of our communities.

16 A declining, and now negative, fund
17 balance that is needed to effectively operate our
18 school system.

19 Additionally, the State of West Virginia
20 declared a state of emergency in Roane County Schools
21 in July of 2025, citing failure to approve a closure
22 and consolidation plan, budgeting deficiencies,
23 building utilization well below average, and a 2.5
24 million dollar deficit that has been reduced already

1 to 1.5 million, but expected to climb 500,000 to 1
2 million more due to personnel overages from last
3 year's personnel season and the required addition of
4 special education staff that have been added this
5 school year.

6 Despite all of these hurdles, our goal is
7 to ensure that every child in Roane County, regardless
8 of where they live, has access to a safe, effective
9 and academically strong learning environment.

10 The proposal under consideration would:

11 Close Walton Elementary Middle School and
12 Geary Elementary Middle School and Geary Elementary
13 Middle School at the conclusion of the 2025-2026
14 school year.

15 Consolidate both school populations into
16 Spencer Elementary, Spencer Middle, and create an
17 early childhood center in the student support area at
18 Roane County High School.

19 Ensure that transportation routes,
20 staffing, and support services are planned carefully
21 to minimize disruption and preserve community
22 connections.

23 Reduce the fiscal deficit by
24 approximately 1.4 million dollars annually.

1 This proposal is guided by the following
2 priorities:

3 Education Quality - Improvement to the
4 educational quality for all students, offer a broader
5 curriculum, specialized teachers, and enhanced
6 extracurricular opportunities.

7 Equity - All students, regardless of home
8 community, deserve access to comparable resources and
9 facilities.

10 Fiscal Responsibility - Consolidation
11 reduces duplicated costs in administration, utilities,
12 and facility maintenance - freeing funds for classroom
13 instruction and student supports.

14 Long-Term Sustainability - A consolidated
15 facility positions Roane County Schools for stable
16 enrollment and improved efficiency for decades to
17 come.

18 By now I hope that you've each had an
19 opportunity to thoroughly review the Impact Statement
20 and supporting data compiled by the leadership team
21 that sits before you. The document was arranged with
22 specific sections addressing enrollment, facilities,
23 finance, personnel, student transportation,
24 educational programs, and the community. Tonight we

1 invite you to ask questions about the construction of
2 the plan and the future impacts of its implementation.

3 We recognize that schools are not only
4 educational institutions but also the anchors of
5 community identity and pride.

6 We approach this process with respect,
7 transparency, and a commitment to open dialogue. The
8 voices of Walton and Geary families, staff and
9 community members are essential to shaping the final
10 decision and Roane County Schools' collective path
11 forward.

12 Following tonight's hearing:

13 All public comments will be recorded and
14 considered by the Roane County Board of Education.

15 The Board will review the data, public
16 input and recommendations before making the final
17 decision on Thursday, November 6, 2025 at the regular
18 meeting of the board.

19 Should the closure and consolidation move
20 forward, a transition plan will be developed
21 collaboratively with staff, parents and community
22 representatives.

23 Change, especially when it involves
24 schools that have served generations, is never easy.

1 But as stewards of our children's education, we must
2 plan not just for today, but for the next 20 to 30
3 years.

4 Our mission remains clear: to provide
5 every student in Roane County with the best possible
6 education in a safe, supportive and forward-looking
7 environment.

8 Thank you for your time, your
9 participation and your continued commitment to the
10 children of Roane County are appreciated.

11 MR. MACE: Ms. Ota?

12 MS. OTA: Yes. Your participation and
13 attendance are encouraged. Speakers are asked to
14 express themselves in a civil matter with due respect
15 to the dignity and courtesy of others when making your
16 comments.

17 Speakers should be aware that the rights
18 of others, under the law defamation or invasion of
19 privacy, you can be held legally responsible. If you
20 are unsure of the legal ramifications of what you are
21 about to say, we encourage you to consult first with
22 your legal adviser.

23 As Mr. Mace has already stated tonight,
24 we have 8 people that signed up to speak tonight, and

1 Mr. Mace has already stated, each person will have
2 five minutes. As your time runs down, I will let you
3 know that you have one minute left by making this
4 sound.

5 Our first speaker tonight is Jennifer
6 Hunt, followed by Joe Rector.

7 MS. JENNIFER HUNT: Good evening, everyone.
8 Thank you all for being here tonight. I know that for
9 many of us, this meeting is filled with mixed
10 emotions.

11 Change, even if it's a possibility, is
12 never easy, especially when it involves our schools
13 and children. Our children are part of our
14 communities for generations.

15 I know this is something that I have
16 personally struggled with. I wish I had something
17 profound to say that would make an impact. What I can
18 say without a doubt is that even on the hardest days,
19 I have worked my time as a Panther, as a Tiger and now
20 as a Raider.

21 As we move forward with the potential
22 consolidation of our schools, it is my hope that we
23 focus -- the focus remains on one thing above all
24 else, the success involving every child in this

1 county.

2 Should the Board decide to move forward
3 with the closure and consolidation plan, Roane County
4 will experience the change from the addition of the
5 early childhood center located within our high school.

6 This new center will not only serve our
7 youngest learners, giving them a strong, nurturing
8 start to their education, but it will also create
9 incredible opportunities for our current high school
10 students.

11 For our early learners, this center means
12 access to high quality early education in a safe and
13 enriching environment.

14 We know that the earliest years of a
15 child's life are some of the most important for brain
16 development, social growth and even well-being.

17 By investing in early childhood education
18 now, for giving our children the best possible start
19 to lifelong learning.

20 To our high school students, this
21 addition opens new doors. Students who are interested
22 in our education, child development or health care can
23 have real hands-on learning experiences right here on
24 campus through internships, mentoring, class

1 partnerships, skills that will prepare them for future
2 careers, and for life beyond high school.

3 Imagine high school students reading to
4 preschoolers, public or learning activities, or
5 assisting teachers while earning early college credits
6 or career certifications.

7 It's an investment not only for our
8 youngest children, but also for our next generation of
9 their years being professionals.

10 As we come together in this situation in
11 our schools, it is important that we preserve what has
12 always made our rural counties special, our family-
13 like atmosphere.

14 I believe every school possesses this
15 amazing quality. We've heard about them in every one
16 of these hearings. I have been fortunate enough to
17 experience that in three Roane County schools.

18 No matter which school building we've
19 called home, I'm sure we all share the same values,
20 support, pride, care for one another.

21 That doesn't change because our buildings
22 do. It is because we as educators and as a community
23 love our students.

24 Thank you to the teachers, staff,

1 families and community members who continue to show
2 resilience, creativity, advocating and compassion
3 through this process.

4 It is my sincerest hope that no matter
5 what at the end of the day, we continue to build
6 something remarkable; a school family that will
7 continue to grow, learn and thrive for generations to
8 come.

9 Thank you.

10 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Joe
11 Rector, followed by Gary King.

12 MR. JOE RECTOR: Good evening. I will lead
13 with I am nowhere near as prepared as my son is. I am
14 not near the prepared speaker that he is. So I hope I
15 don't go off the rails or lose track.

16 I don't have a whole lot to say or to
17 really bring up, but I have a question. My wife and I
18 are here this evening to support Roane County High
19 School and Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Raines also reached out to
20 me to support the high school.

21 They had a couple previous endeavors to
22 get into, and asked me if I could just make sure that
23 they were mentioned. They are sending their support
24 for you all.

1 I do want to let you all know that I can
2 understand some of the decisions that you are getting
3 ready to make, that they are hard. They are not going
4 to be easy.

5 I'm not saying that the decisions that I
6 ever made in my life are as hard, as easy or anything
7 that you all have. I do referee on football, high
8 school football and high school wrestling, and I know
9 that every time I step out on the ballfield, I step on
10 a wrestling mat, and I make a call that half of that
11 room is going to hate me.

12 You all are about to make a call or a
13 decision and throw a flag that probably more than half
14 is not going to like it.

15 I disagree, but I can understand and know
16 that you will make whatever decision you make with the
17 best educational decision you can make, and I applaud
18 you for making whatever decision you make, because I
19 know you are doing it in the best interests of our
20 children.

21 I have been an employee here for about 18
22 years. I moved in from Kanawha County, and came from
23 a school system that was completely different, and I
24 found a home in Walton, in a community that is not

1 only just a community, but a county that supported me
2 through a pretty life-changing, life-altering sickness
3 with cancer, and I can see how small communities and
4 small counties can help you to get you through just
5 about anything that you can get through.

6 So I know the impact of that small, home
7 town community, and when they come together, and when
8 they support something, they are all in.

9 That being said, I just wanted to share
10 that little bit of experience, and I know that
11 sometimes these schools that, you know, like my son
12 said, we hold near and dear. They are just special.
13 They've got memories that can never be replaced, and
14 hopefully, we can make them once whatever decisions we
15 make.

16 The question that my wife and Mrs. Raines
17 and myself, are kind of leaning at, that we would like
18 to ask really, you may have already addressed it. I
19 wanted to make sure deals with the programs that if
20 you would not close the buildings, I noticed somewhere
21 in there you talked about what programs may or may not
22 be covered.

23 Does that limit itself to the specials,
24 to the arts programs, to the phys ed, you know, art

1 and music? Does that open it up to the programs like
2 the FHA, FFA, 4-H groups that come and do things?

3 Are those programs going to be things
4 that we might lose in the process of this
5 consolidation or not consolidation, if we would go
6 that route?

7 Are we going to have schools that, you
8 know, you come to and you are getting math, English,
9 science, social studies, and there's nothing else to
10 be offered as an elective?

11 Are those schools going to leave open for
12 our future students, are they going to want to come
13 because there's nothing else there for them to pursue
14 and do?

15 I wasn't expecting to make the buzzer, so
16 I'm kind of impressed with myself.

17 I do appreciate your time. I will keep
18 you all in my prayers. I know that you've got a lot
19 of hard things to do. I've worked for several of you
20 up there, and I will probably work for some of you in
21 the future.

22 I appreciate everything you are doing for
23 our county, and I just hope that you make the best
24 decisions for everyone.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Gary King,
3 followed by Chad Perkins.

4 MR. GARY KING: I would like to start off by
5 saying that I grew up in the schools in Roane County.
6 I went to Spencer Grade School back when the class
7 size was 30 per classroom.

8 I went to Spencer High School, and I was
9 one of those kids that if I had that opportunity to
10 hide behind another student and disappear from a
11 teacher, I did that.

12 I will have three children next year, one
13 will be in high school, one will be in middle school,
14 one will be in elementary school.

15 Those kids are well behaved. They are
16 respectful, and I don't see within this classroom that
17 there's going to be a better educational environment.
18 I just can't see that.

19 Now I want to talk about the bus routes.
20 As I grew up in the military, everybody believed leave
21 no one behind, and the school system for years was no
22 child left behind.

23 well, the bus route schedules that I have
24 seen, we're leaving 120 kids behind. That's four

1 classrooms, four classrooms of kids that are losing
2 their ride to school.

3 As I have been sitting here, I have heard
4 plenty up here talking about college, and that she had
5 a difficult time going to college because she from a
6 family and she was just talking about how difficult it
7 was getting back and forth.

8 But they are not adults, and I just can't
9 imagine that morally leaving those kids behind is the
10 right thing to do. I just don't see it. I can't
11 imagine. Think of them sitting at the end of their
12 driveway with no ride to school.

13 I've known a lot of people in Roane
14 County, and I'd like to see you make the right
15 decision, and I just don't think that consolidation is
16 the right decision.

17 I don't think it will impact the kids in
18 a way that they think well, I don't think the
19 educational opportunities will be there with the bus
20 routes and making kids ride so long to get to school
21 and onto a bus. I think we are going to lose kids in
22 the county.

23 I think it is going to be a downhill
24 spiral as kids leave. We are not going to get as much

1 money from the State. I don't think the State policy
2 is written for low density challenges like ours.

3 I know we didn't get into this situation
4 because the report said that the School Board
5 misappropriated funds, because of lost people from the
6 county. That wasn't the sole reason.

7 I know that the State policies is not
8 written for that, and we haven't passed a school bond
9 levy in eight years or longer. So I think, in my
10 mind, it's not the right thing. I also think that the
11 State needs to revise their policy and give enough
12 money. I think that we need a school bond levy, not
13 on you, but it's on us in the community, and if we
14 don't follow it together, it's not going to be pretty.

15 I ask you to reconsider the
16 consolidation.

17 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Chad
18 Perkins, followed by T. C. Torre.

19 MR. CHAD PERKINS: All right. Thanks again
20 for allowing me to address the group assembled here
21 and the community. I am going to try to tie all these
22 things together that we've talked about for the last
23 five hearings, and to the grand finale.

24 I simply just try to address the topics

1 and developments that were on the top of my mind here
2 today, so I will continue to do that tonight.

3 The Impact Statement is not a sufficient
4 document to justify the school closings in the
5 consolidation plan. As evidenced by a large number of
6 speakers who have articulated that better than me, the
7 document in and of itself is inadequate.

8 It's inadequate in an attempt to be cast
9 as a true subjective and objective costs of this
10 action.

11 without that, which was presented in a
12 better format to compare against, one would struggle
13 to approve the plan.

14 The State Department of Education has
15 failed Roane Countians, and the State Department of
16 Education has failed west Virginians in the whole.

17 From a policy standpoint, consolidation
18 contradicts the State's Constitutional commitment to
19 provide an efficient education to all west Virginians.

20 Efficiency as its been said at these
21 meetings the last week cannot be measured solely in
22 dollars spent. It must include equity, access and the
23 long-term development of rural communities.

24 School consolidation in rural west

1 Virginia is not an act of progress, but rather a
2 retreat from our obligation to the people. For me and
3 my family, we will not retreat.

4 Consolidation weakens communities, harms
5 students and erodes the level of stability. The
6 better path forward is to strengthen, not abandon, the
7 schools that have long been the foundation of our
8 rural life.

9 I will not allow the erosion of this
10 life, but I particularly cannot allow for the Board to
11 harm us who need it the most.

12 To that point, as you heard last night,
13 not from me, but as you heard last, we desire to
14 purchase the properties and convert them into fully
15 functioning community centers that are alive, alive
16 with Roane countians of all ages, and when you
17 consider that financial impact on me and my family, I
18 would follow the (inaudible) creed, if you all will
19 bear with me, you know, obvious or inherent
20 plagiarisms, I repeat to you paragraphs two and three,
21 with just slight changes to apply this away from
22 agriculture and rather to our situation here.

23 Paragraph two, I believe that to live and
24 work in Roane County is pleasant, as well as

1 challenging. I know the joys and discomforts of
2 living here and hold an informed fondness for those
3 associations which even in hours of discouragement, I
4 cannot deny.

5 Paragraph three, I believe in leadership
6 from ourselves and respect from others. I believe in
7 my own ability to work efficiently and think clearly,
8 and I believe in the ability of Roane Countians,
9 present and future, to serve our own and the public
10 interests.

11 We desire to purchase the properties, not
12 to give this Board or the State Board a quote/unquote,
13 "out." I would caution them not to see it that way.
14 Please don't.

15 We are compelled to do so because we owe
16 it. We owe it to these communities not to erode, but
17 to build, through the joys and discomforts to try to
18 provide some stability where there appears to be none.

19 So I will leave you with that caution,
20 and with this caveat so it is perfectly clear to
21 everyone listening, the first choice and the best
22 choice is for this Board to vote no, and preserve the
23 public school system in Southern Roane County.

24 Thank you.

1 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have T. C.
2 Torres, followed by Valerie Mace.

3 MS. T. C. TORRE: My name is T. C. Torre, and
4 I want to start off by saying that I did not attend
5 Roane County schools, but I did grow up here. Most of
6 my cousins graduated from Roane County High School.
7 My mom graduated valedictorian from their respective
8 classes at Walton High School.

9 My grandfather graduated from Walton High
10 School, and then spent his entire teaching career in
11 the county, eventually as the Vice-Principal at Walton
12 High School.

13 I didn't expect to be raising my family
14 here, but I am so fortunate to be able to call this
15 community my home, and I personally have a four-year
16 old in the pre-school class at Walton, and I know that
17 he has a wonderful community there. He sees Mrs.
18 Starcher every morning, by yelling hey, neighbor.
19 He's made so many friends that he can't tell me their
20 names, but they all know him.

21 If you as the School Board choose to
22 close these schools, my child will be fine. Most of
23 the children that have been represented here at these
24 meetings, they are going to be fine. They will

1 survive. It will be hard, but their parents are there
2 to support them.

3 I personally work in social services here
4 in Roane County at a job assisting families in need.
5 I spend my days working to create programs to help get
6 parents more involved to get back on their feet and to
7 provide for their families.

8 I have seen firsthand the lack of
9 reliable transportation available in this county.

10 Our surveys are so -- one of the top
11 issues that people are having being transportation,
12 and those percentages are even higher for the people
13 living in the walton/Geary areas.

14 what is going to happen to these students
15 who are responsible for getting themselves to the bus
16 stop, the bus stop that is now going to be two miles
17 or more away from their home?

18 what happens to the parents that work in
19 Charleston or the one-car families who have a parent
20 that works out of the area?

21 How will those children get to the bus
22 stop or to school in general? Is that not the
23 problem? Is the budget just a bigger issue than
24 educating these vulnerable children?

1 I work at a job providing food services
2 among other things to those that are least fortunate
3 in this county. We serve about 100 families in Roane
4 County, and at least a-quarter of those families have
5 one parent that did not complete high school. These
6 are all Roane County area students or previous
7 students, a lot of whom attended Roane County High
8 School after the consolidation.

9 So how do we expect closing these middle
10 schools and limiting the accessibility of easy
11 transportation to affect our graduation rates, to
12 affect illiteracy in this county, because we have
13 several parents that are illiterate.

14 The biggest issue to me, and what I feel
15 should be the biggest issue to the entire community,
16 is that often the children who need the most important
17 structure, are the ones who are parents that are
18 unable or unwilling to provide.

19 This often rests the burden on teachers
20 to see the signs of neglect in these children. How
21 are we making sure with the increasing class size and
22 new students, that those vulnerable children don't
23 fall through the cracks.

24 These are students who are often relying

1 only on themselves to get to school. Now they have to
2 figure out how to get themselves and their siblings to
3 a bus stop two or more miles away. How can we help
4 them if their parents cannot?

5 That is the unfair responsibility of the
6 teachers, the Board of Education, the school system
7 and this community as a whole.

8 what happens to the child that doesn't
9 know how to reach out when they are a victim of abuse,
10 and their teacher is the only safe adult that they see
11 and now they don't have a way to get to school. Are
12 you willing to leave them in the darkness?

13 I know that these questions are hard. I
14 know you have an almost impossible decision to make,
15 but we need to be there for our kids, especially the
16 ones that are on the outreaches that are going to have
17 the hardest time finding transportation, finding a way
18 to school. They need our help. They need our
19 support.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Valerie
22 Mace, followed by Gabe Boggs.

23 MS. VALERIE MACE: Good evening. Thanks for
24 bearing with me again. I feel as if I have to speak

1 out for Geary just one more time. Emotions and
2 budgets don't mix well. I know, but I hold a very
3 special place in my heart for Geary.

4 In 1981, I was part of the first class in
5 the consolidation of Newton, Linden and Left Hand into
6 one school.

7 It was an exciting time. We were -- we
8 had an inside bathroom, and it was a big deal. We had
9 somewhat of a gym. There were more opportunities for
10 kids then.

11 This has a very different feel. This
12 consolidation has a very different feel. There may be
13 more opportunities for our middle school students, but
14 what about our younger kids?

15 I know that some people in the Spencer
16 area spoke a lot about the unfairness and the per-
17 people ratio, and the drain on the resources to keep
18 our community schools open.

19 But I believe that the consolidation will
20 swing that pendulum the other way. I believe that
21 will make it unfair for our kids in our communities.
22 We'll still be paying the taxes. We'll still be doing
23 our part and fulfilling our responsibilities, but we
24 won't have a school within 25 miles of us.

1 As the last speaker said, the kids who
2 are going to be hurt the most are the kids that don't
3 have the other opportunities. They don't have anybody
4 to take them to the bus stop.

5 what she said rang so true to me, because
6 I see the people dropping off every day, and I see the
7 people picking up every day, and those people will,
8 they will make it. Like they said, they'll take their
9 kids somewhere else or go to whatever county. They'll
10 drive them in here, whatever they do.

11 But I've had kids who say I couldn't wake
12 my mom up, and then I had missed the bus, and I
13 couldn't come to school. That's the reality.

14 Lastly, I have no question that our
15 schools will -- students will choose to remain in the
16 county and endure the long travel time will be treated
17 well. My two children traveled right here to RCHS
18 through their high school years, and participated in
19 extracurricular activities. But that took a toll on
20 them.

21 They handled it because they were good
22 students, and they had a good support system. But I
23 don't like to think of the impact on the other
24 students in our county.

1 By closing these schools, you are
2 disenfranchising two-thirds of our county. This isn't
3 just your normal consolidation. I know some people
4 are saying it's happening everywhere. It's not just
5 us. It's everywhere.

6 But it's not like closing a school on one
7 side of St. Albans, and busing them to the other side
8 of St. Albans. It's not the same thing.

9 This isn't the same thing. I ask you to
10 find another way. I know. It's a big ask.

11 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Gabe
12 Boggs, followed by Rachel Hays.

13 MR. GABE BOGGS: Yesterday, the whole day for
14 me was really long. This school had a meeting. I
15 didn't prepare. It was on a Monday after the time
16 change and right after Halloween, but I decided last
17 week, Thursday through Sunday, I was going to focus on
18 something other than the schools.

19 I kind of relaxed, spent some time with
20 family and friends. I relaxed so much, and I didn't
21 put enough effort in my relationship with God, and I'm
22 new to this relationship, and honestly, a few weeks
23 ago, I didn't imagine where I would end up. I didn't
24 read the scripture I usually do. If I did, I rushed

1 through it, and I didn't allow myself to receive it.
2 I was falling asleep at night before I finished my
3 conversations with God through my prayers.

4 I exercised my freewill, and not on
5 purpose, but I inadvertently minimized my relationship
6 with God.

7 After the meeting last night, I was
8 reflecting while I was driving home, and then I had a
9 long conversation with my wife, but I had a lot of
10 trouble pinpointing the emotions that I was feeling
11 last night.

12 This is true. I have trouble with this.
13 It's a work in progress just like everything else.
14 But after self-reflection and our conversation, I
15 realized the three things that I left here feeling.

16 Loneliness. I wasn't alone. In fact,
17 rarely am I ever actually alone, but it was heavy
18 yesterday. I've felt this way many times before,
19 especially when I'm with groups of people. So I
20 recognized it somewhat.

21 But I had trouble understanding why I
22 felt that way here. But I realized that speaking here
23 at these hearings has been very lonely. It feels like
24 I am speaking to no one, especially when every

1 legitimate question we asked about this document gets
2 lip service as the answer, or simply restates the
3 question back to us.

4 The next feeling was hopelessness,
5 especially when I think about the current situation
6 that we are in, and Jerry, your comments the other
7 night made me think about that.

8 I know that you -- I know you from years
9 in the past, and I know that you are doing everything
10 you can to try to figure out how to get as many kids
11 to school within the financial and travel restrictions
12 that the state sets for you. I understand that.

13 Betrayal is the last thing I felt. But
14 they system from top to bottom that govern our
15 schools. This is kind of my first realization of
16 this. That our system is a failure in regards to
17 public education.

18 Over the past few weeks, it's been very
19 clearly laid out in front of me as I've studied and
20 researched how broken it is, because of mankind's
21 failures.

22 I've had a lot of faith in public schools
23 my whole life, and I had no idea how truly bad it was.
24 It appears it's only about dollars and cents,

1 standardized test score, and getting the bare minimum
2 done to meet the bare minimum requirements.

3 Board, you have a very tough decision
4 coming up Thursday. I don't envy you. It's like
5 playing a game when all the rules are stacked up
6 against you and it's challenging.

7 That's exactly how it feels to grow up in
8 this county if you come from Geary or Walton. So I
9 can relate.

10 well, at least some of the people do
11 accept the challenge, and they can move on past that
12 and finalize success, but most people right now are
13 asking what's coming next. Our groceries and
14 utilities are crazy expensive. Automobiles, fuel,
15 utilities, for everything in our home. We still get
16 payments. Right. Everything is changing.

17 The government shutdown is currently --
18 the help that the government usually does give is
19 delayed or halted, and people have nowhere to turn.

20 And now, we are closing the schools, so
21 good luck. But I understand that we should find
22 confidence in the fact that you promise to do
23 everything you can.

24 My entire point regarding the forecast

1 and lineal projection, and perhaps more relevant than
2 you can see right now largely due to probably my
3 inability to explain it, or your unwillingness to
4 listen. I'm not sure.

5 I say that because it doesn't take a
6 large analysis to predict that all public schools are
7 failing, and the ones that actually can push back, and
8 don't have the courage to stand up.

9 I ask you to put the students first in
10 making your decision.

11 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next we have Rachel
12 Hays. This will be our last speaker.

13 MS. RACHEL HAYS: Good evening everybody. So
14 first I want to tell you, I am going to make this
15 pretty short and sweet this evening. I wasn't
16 actually originally planning on speaking, but I am a
17 member of the PTO at Walton and so we have some
18 concerns, but I want to make sure that they get
19 addressed.

20 At the end of the school year last year,
21 our teachers were instructed to move their classrooms,
22 to empty out the lower elementary rooms out of the
23 school. Even though it was inconvenient, the teachers
24 did it because that's what they are willing to do to

1 help cut costs, anything and everything to help cut
2 costs.

3 Since then that end of the building has
4 remained vacant. If you want to see what these
5 schools look like when they are closed, I suggest you
6 make time to visit that part of the building. I found
7 it quite unsettling the last time I was there for a
8 teacher lunch that we did for the PTO. It was --
9 yeah, I felt what it looked like for our future,
10 unfortunately.

11 The people at Walton got tired of waiting
12 for something to be done with that part of the
13 building, and we recently voted to submit a waiver for
14 policy 6200. That deals with the utilization.

15 The idea would be that that part of the
16 building would be somewhat closed off and then could
17 be rented out to other businesses outside businesses,
18 daycares anything like that. I know that's something
19 that's been talked about in the past, but there is
20 nothing done on it so we decided to try to do our part
21 to push movement on that.

22 The agenda for the next board meeting was
23 the waiver half way through the consent agenda. So
24 after the vote that occurs on consolidation. Now, not

1 only was this idea brought up last year about as a way
2 that we could bring money into the school system, I
3 think there even some preliminary talks done with
4 outside organizations, but nothing ever came to
5 fruition about it.

6 Now, I feel like even though we have
7 tried to exercise our rights as a LSIC, it is all
8 still for nothing because if it occurs after the vote
9 on consolidation, then anything that we may be able to
10 accomplish with this LSIC waiver will be for naught,
11 because the decision will already have been made.

12 So I guess my question therein would be
13 why is it so far down the agenda, and why can't we
14 allow for things like LSIC waivers to take place
15 before the vote on consolidation?

16 I understand that there are timing
17 restrictions. I also just continue to be so
18 frustrated by the fact that there have been multiple,
19 multiple plans, and I know we have all talked about
20 how none of those plans save us as much as this
21 consolidation does in one line item?

22 But I can't help but think that if maybe
23 we had taken action on some of those smaller, but the
24 larger of those smaller plans last year when we knew

1 that this was unfortunately in our future, that maybe
2 things would look a lot different today.

3 So I am asking you to consider that also
4 when you think about your vote, and just to since I've
5 got a little extra time just to drive a point home.

6 I also want to reiterate the fact that I
7 think, you know, what everybody else has said
8 basically when it comes to consolidation, I understand
9 that there's a thought the State will come in, but --
10 if we vote no for consolidation, but I also feel like
11 there is a time and a place when you stand up for
12 what's right, and I think the only recourse we have at
13 this point is to say no, we will not bow to your
14 requests. We will stand up for our schools and our
15 county, and we will stand up for the children in our
16 county, and we will not allow you to dictate to us
17 what's best for our children when you are not willing
18 to work with the Legislature and provide us the
19 funding we need to support these children.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. MACE: Okay. That concludes our speakers
22 for tonight's hearing. Ms. Stellato, do you need some
23 deliberate with your people?

24 MS. STELLATO: Yes, just like five minutes.

1 MR. MACE: Okay. We will be in recess until
2 6:00.

3
4 (WHEREUPON, the meeting was
5 In recess at 5:49 p.m., after
6 which reconvened at 6:00 p.m.)
7

8 MR. MACE: We will call the meeting back to
9 order. Go ahead, Ms. Stellatto.

10 MS. STELLATO: Thank you. Okay, I am going
11 to start this evening with, since this is our last
12 hearing, I do want to go on record of mentioning that
13 we did receive, that the Board has received a copy of
14 the letter that was submitted with six copies as
15 described, and it did meet the deadline of October 24th
16 at noon.

17 The letter was received from Christina
18 wilde, a resident of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Christina
19 raises a question about Granny's Creek transportation,
20 and for most of you who are reading this there was an
21 article sent to the newspaper. You can definitely
22 read that there.

23 Mr. Garner will address the questions on
24 Granny's Creek one more time?

1 MR. GARNER: We said that Granny's Creek, I
2 am just talking about if we consolidate, into Spice
3 Ridge, I understand and there's been different people
4 that have asked me about Granny's Creek so we rode in
5 the car to see where it is.

6 There are some people who rode buses to
7 see where it is, but when we talk about Spice Ridge
8 out, then get into town, we can do that in an hour.

9 Can we go all the way up where Spice
10 Ridge and Cory Road meet, there's a church up there,
11 no.

12 That's where somebody mentioned tonight
13 there are 104 kids that we can't get, that's where
14 those numbers come from, just to try to get them in
15 town within an hour, we are restrained by Policy 6204.

16 MS. STELLATO: Okay. So as I typically do is
17 try to get a few out of the way. The question was
18 raised tonight by Rachel why was the LSIC waiver so
19 far down on the agenda.

20 There is a section on the agenda called -
21 - that's reference policies, and so by nature, you are
22 asking for a waiver for a policy, so that's why it
23 went there.

24 The Board does receive the information

1 beforehand so they are not getting it cold. We will
2 have had time to review that waiver. It's already
3 loaded into the Board file before tonight's meeting
4 for them to review at their leisure.

5 One of the things that will be important,
6 and it's kind of a segway talking about some of the
7 questions that Mr. Rector asked. If I am remembering
8 correctly, from the waiver, it looks like about
9 100,000, a little bit over 100,000 savings in that.
10 So that would be part of, in my mind, as you know is I
11 assisted Tiffany in trying to figure out a way to get
12 that waiver to fruition.

13 But it would be part of if the Board
14 knows, then what can we do to cut costs, but as it is
15 written, it is a waiver to a policy that goes under
16 the policy section. The Board always has the
17 opportunity to rearrange the order of items when
18 something is reviewed.

19 So they will have that at their leisure
20 as well.

21 Okay. Somebody said something about a
22 process of children. We reviewed the plan just to
23 make sure that we did not miss something in the
24 calculations or questions regarding children. As it

1 was written, we closed the data on August 23rd.

2 In fact, many of the classroom averages
3 dropped as a result of putting on hold our resources
4 together.

5 Let's see, alternative programs. So Joe
6 asked a question tonight about if you don't close the
7 buildings, will opportunities, programs may be cut.

8 So if some reason the Board -- if the
9 Board votes no on Thursday night, then we will be back
10 together on Friday, and I have told the entire team to
11 reserve Friday, but we will likely be together anyway
12 whichever direction that we go, but if the vote is no,
13 whichever direction that we go, but if vote is no,
14 then the first item on the agenda, and they know this
15 is the way I operate, we will begin with the chart on
16 the wall with \$1.4 million written on it, and we will
17 begin to knock it down. What it's going to take?
18 What's the first cut? What's the second cut?

19 We've already done our budget cutting
20 measure meeting where we talked about all of these.
21 We talked about the positives, the negatives, how each
22 one of them would work.

23 So that's the direction on Friday, and
24 that goes to fruition, and we start knocking them down

1 to the point where we then have a presentation to
2 present to the Board.

3 I believe I think that we can do that.
4 We've been clear in some of our answers that the arts
5 would likely be one of the areas that take a cut. But
6 I figure you are right in that we would also be
7 looking at athletics. Athletics is on the table. You
8 mentioned FBLA, FFA, it would require, you know, even
9 in our highest estimates of looking at simply the
10 arts.

11 I can't remember exactly, but I think it
12 was like the upper hundreds of thousands. We have to
13 be, our regulations require our secondary students,
14 but we would just keep adding to that list until we
15 got to the point where everybody, you know, understood
16 that the cuts that would be made have had the same
17 target that we've got to get the school district to a
18 point where I can make the payroll and pay our
19 employees going into the next school year.

20 Again, as we've talked about before, I
21 would have to answer, and we've talked about that, and
22 so, maybe we would have to accept that plan as well.
23 As stated before, we are an extra set, an extra watch
24 list, for lack thereof.

1 But absolutely, it would require cuts in
2 multiple programs in multiple areas to even get close
3 to that level of savings.

4 One of the things that -- so we heard
5 several times tonight, you heard me say before, I kind
6 of look and I heard several times tonight when
7 somebody was speaking about -- it reminded me of when
8 I was the principal at Spencer Elementary, and we had
9 all the kiddos in a certain area of town. I won't
10 name that area, but they all were still working.

11 But, you know, they couldn't come. They
12 would miss the bus. They couldn't get there. There
13 was no parent to bring them, and you know, we had to
14 go out of our way. So we tried to bring them in one
15 time. So we tried to ride them in, to get the vans to
16 be able to navigate that area of town. We couldn't
17 get those population students to school if their
18 parents overslept and they called and they didn't have
19 a way to get there. We weren't successful with that
20 grant.

21 But it may be something like that that we
22 have to put our heads together and think in a really
23 creative ways that we can, you know, address a known
24 need. We all agree that there will be another meeting

1 should this consolidation and closure go through, but
2 we will have children who very well may not have a way
3 to get to school, and that's not okay with us. It's
4 not, regardless of what some people may believe, it's
5 not.

6 We in communities and schools know these
7 kids are not new to us. We know who they are, but the
8 principals and the staff know where they live. They
9 are doing everything they can right now to meet their
10 needs, and we will continue to do whatever we can to
11 meet the needs of the kiddos, and not leave them
12 behind.

13 T. C. said it's an unfair responsibility
14 on schools, and I think we all signed up for careers
15 in the field of human services, including you and your
16 services, and I think we are going to be relied
17 heavily on our communities and schools and our
18 counsellors and our mental health department to kind
19 of say what else can we do?

20 If we can't get them this way, how else
21 can we get to them? I think I speak for everybody up
22 here, that that will not be wasted on us, the idea
23 that we ever have children who cannot get to their bus
24 stops.

1 There was a comment made that we were
2 taking action last year on some of these things. I
3 agree, and I would say that we've taken action on as
4 many as we possibly can do.

5 It may not seem quite remarkable to the
6 outside person, and I wish Ms. Hardman was here this
7 evening with us, but the fact that we've done what
8 we've done as quickly as we've done it to mitigate
9 continued loses in the finances, and the fact that we
10 thought we were going to be here, and I can't remember
11 the exact number of --

12 Anyway, we were overwhelmed, and we had
13 every position we possibly -- in July we were X-number
14 of positions over the borderline for professionals,
15 and we have cut and cut and cut to get us to a neutral
16 with professionals. We are still over on service
17 personnel, but we've not had the opportunities to
18 reduce those positions for this school year.

19 If you know anything about personnel law,
20 it's virtually impossible to reduce and get to the
21 point that we have done. I am proud of this team.
22 I'm proud of what they've done. We wish we could do
23 more. There's not a day that we say when something
24 comes through, or can we afford this? Can we pay for

1 this? How are we going to pay for this? Can we cut
2 this? Can we do without this? It's a constant
3 conversation, and I would put this team up against any
4 team that they have thought of ways. They have
5 reduced the costs. Kudos to Walton staff and Ms. Hunt
6 who was there to guide them through that charge to
7 address trying to underutilize the building and move.
8 That was not fun.

9 I walked in there this summer and that
10 was hard work, and I answered that when we had that
11 idea. We didn't quite understand the magnitude of how
12 great the deficit actually was. We never would have
13 asked them to do that. But it definitely did reduce
14 the utility costs and I know the principals are
15 tracking their utility costs. They are tracking their
16 student participation and food, and we are doing
17 everything we can to encourage revenue to go up and
18 expenses to go down, trying to mitigate this deficit
19 before we get to a season where we actually can do
20 something to change it.

21 I think that's all the questions tonight.
22 But I just will end with this. Joe said that no
23 matter the call we make, you know, and but I am going
24 to say it's not good. It's a heavy time to be at the

1 helm of Roane County schools, but it doesn't deter us
2 in our determination to try to make it better.

3 No matter what these five individuals
4 decide on Thursday evening, it's not a win. It's not
5 a win in any way, shape or form. The loss of
6 enrollment is going to continue regardless of the
7 decision. The community has spoken and we can't get a
8 levy and that is holding us back tremendously. It was
9 asked tonight by the TV reporter, how are you going to
10 do that, and I say it's just one conversation, one
11 meeting, one decision at a time.

12 We have to restore the trust in Roane
13 County schools. We have to get our people to believe
14 in what we are trying to do for the kids, and to be
15 honest with you, there are days that it gets really
16 hard, and I just don't understand. I see the
17 potential here. I talked about this because I see
18 what we can become, but we can't do it if we can't get
19 ourselves going in the right direction.

20 Fighting against each other is never
21 okay. I mean, I don't know about them, but we all and
22 I will speak for them and say we are all losing sleep
23 figuring out what we are doing to the children. Are
24 we truly going to recover from this? I don't know. I

1 don't know, but I know that I have a duty to the two
2 hundred plus employees to pay their paycheck, and I'm
3 not sure I can do it, and I know that I got a call, I
4 had a great conversation with somebody last week, and
5 that person said will they really not help you pay
6 your paychecks? No. I don't think they will.

7 In fact, I called and confirmed it the
8 next day, and I was told we cut 20 of our own
9 employees. We can't carry yours.

10 So I don't know what the answer is. I
11 don't think it's a good answer anyway, but what I am
12 telling you is these people said they would inform
13 you. We'll work everyday to try to make it better,
14 regardless of the outcome, and even if the vote is no,
15 we will be together on Friday to figure out a way to
16 do it.

17 I am grateful for all of you. I am
18 grateful for the people that showed up and came to
19 every one of these hearings and made us think, made us
20 work harder.

21 Like I always say a thorn in your side
22 makes you do better. You just get better when you
23 address the concerns and the problems that you are
24 faced with.

1 So I hope that we, at some point, we've
2 done as much justice as we can do. We definitely
3 could do better, and I will tell you, that I believe
4 that we have not made any decision that we didn't
5 think about the kids when we were making these
6 decisions.

7 So I appreciate everybody that's come
8 out.

9 MR. MACE: Thank you. Our meeting at Roane
10 County High School, I will entertain a motion to
11 adjourn until our next regular Board meeting on
12 Thursday, November the 6th, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Roane
13 County High School.

14 Any motion, please? It has been moved
15 and seconded. All those in favor, say aye? Opposed?
16 That motion carries.

17

18

* * * * *

19

(Concluded at 6:15 p.m.)

20

* * * * *

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,
COUNTY OF ROANE, to wit:

I, Donna H. Miller, Notary Public in and for the State of West Virginia, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that the foregoing Special Meeting of the Board of Education was duly taken by and before me, under the West Virginia Rules of Civil Procedure, at the time and place and for the purpose specified in the caption thereof.

I do certify that the said hearing was correctly taken by me by means of the Stenomask; that the same was transcribed by me, and that the said transcript is a true record of the hearing.

I further certify that I am not connected by blood or marriage with any of the parties to this action, am not a relative or employee or attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of such attorney or counsel, or financially interested in the action, or interested, directly or indirectly, in the matter in controversy.

Given under my hand this 20th day of
November, 2025.

Donna H. Miller
Notary Public

My commission expires December 12, 2028.

ROANE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA, SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL
IN RE: CLOSURE AND CONSOLIDATION OF GEARY AND WALTON
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL AND CONSOLIDATION
OF K-5 INTO SPENCER ELEMENTARY AND GRADES
6-8 INTO SPENCER MIDDLE SCHOOL AND
CONSOLIDATION OF PRE-K INTO ROANE COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL

PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 6, 2025
6:00 PM

ROANE COUNTY SCHOOL
1 RAIDER WAY
SPENCER, WEST VIRGINIA

Donna H. Miller,
Court Reporter

1

CAPITOL CITY REPORTING
"PROFESSIONAL STENOMASK FOR THE RECORD"

POST OFFICE BOX 11394, CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA 25339 • (304) 767-4231 FAX (304) 344-9506

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS:

MICHELLE STELLATO
SUPERINTENDENT
CORRIE OTA
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ANN HARDMAN
MICHELLE ASH
LORRA TANNER
AMY COLE
JERRY GARNER

BOARD MEMBERS:

JEFF MACE
DARIS HARPER
DENNS CARPENTER
JAMES MINNEY
EILEEN RICHARDSON

PRINCIPALS:

MEGAN STARCHER
ANNETTE CLAYPOOL
JENNIFER HUNT
SARABETH MONK
SPECIAL ED COORDINATOR
LORI HAMRIC COTTRELL

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SIGNED UP TO SPEAK:

TIFFANY RAINES
JUSTIN SHEARS
RACHEL HAYS
KATELYN SAMPLES

NOVEMBER 6, 2025

6:00 P.M.

NEW BUSINESS

MS. OTA: Okay, our first speaker will be Tiffany Raines, followed by Justin Shears.

MS. TIFFANY RAINES: Good evening. Before I say what I really came to say, I just wanted to mention that a member of our LSIC contacted me this morning.

She had seen on an agenda for the upcoming West Virginia Board of Education meeting on November 12th, one of the line items on the agenda is for a statewide labor policy 6204, Section 324, and it's requesting to allow counties to complete the required procedures for closing a school on or before February 27th of the calendar year, which the closures or consolidation are to be effective.

It is being recommended that the request for statewide waiver be approved, and we ask that you consider this before making a decision.

I actually wanted to speak more to the community rather than the Board, but there's no platform. I want to say please don't take the lack of presence here tonight means a lack of heart.

1 We have been fighting this fight for
2 quite some time, and we are all very tired. We have
3 obligations to our families, careers and personal
4 lives, and we are just exhausted.

5 Regardless of what happens tonight, it's
6 important that we stay active. If the Board votes to
7 not close our schools, do not be fooled into believing
8 that we have won the war.

9 The same conditions that brought us to
10 this point still exists and will bring us here again
11 if we do not actively communicate and pressure our
12 Legislature to change our state-aid formula for
13 schools.

14 That will take a lot of people working on
15 this. We've been saying this for a long time, and it
16 hasn't been taken care of.

17 If the Board votes to close and
18 consolidate our schools, it is also important that we
19 stay active. We would need to make the transition as
20 easy as possible for our children and look forward.

21 It breaks my heart to think of all that
22 we are losing, but it also hurts to think that our own
23 feelings to keep our children from growing and
24 blossoming in their new environment.

1 Sorry. I just want to thank everybody
2 who really did put up a fight throughout this process
3 and I appreciate everyone.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Justin
6 Shears, followed by Rachel Hayes.

7 MR. JUSTIN SHEARS: Good evening. This evening I
8 wanted to share a story with the Board that I think kind of
9 goes hand in hand. Ms. Stellato said she enjoys a good
10 metaphor.

11 So this is kind of on a totally different
12 topic, but I think it really speaks to what leadership really
13 is. This story was delivered from a pastor named Josh
14 Howerton on a book written by Gus Lee called, Courage, The
15 Backbone of Leadership.

16 Mr. Lee tells the story of when General Norman
17 Schwarzkopf came and lectured at his class at West Point, and
18 he poses a class case study question.

19 Imagine that you and your troops, for which
20 you are responsible, are on an international border. The
21 enemy can cross and strike you with impunity, but you can't
22 cross the border.

23 That order comes from the Commander-in-Chief
24 himself, the President.

1 Every night, the enemy crosses the border to
2 kill and wound your men who are Vietnamese airborne
3 volunteers in your care.

4 Every night, you chase the enemy, but they
5 escape at the border where you stop as ordered. Here's the
6 question. When the enemy hits you again tonight, do you
7 pursue them over the line, or do you follow orders and halt
8 at the border?

9 He then pauses and says, questions? A few
10 guys begin to raise their hands in the class. First guy
11 says, if we cross the border, will it start a new war? He
12 answers, no.

13 Second person asks, if we cross, can we
14 destroy the enemy? He says, yes. If we cross it and are
15 discovered, will we get in trouble? General Schwarzkopf
16 answers, absolutely. Your president will be very displeased
17 with you personally.

18 No more questions. Stop or go? Write your
19 answers on the page in front of you.

20 Now, going back to what Gus Lee says, I
21 thought the answer was pretty obvious. If I've learned one
22 thing here, it's that you follow orders, especially from the
23 President.

24 Right from wrong, disobeying the President

1 would be very wrong. So I wrote stop. General Schwarzkopf
2 asked the class,

3 How many people wrote stop? Gus Lee says, I
4 raised my hand, as did most of the class. Then he said, how
5 many said go? A few sparse hands raised.

6 General Schwarzkopf smiled at the few hands,
7 and then he said this, there are two types of people in the
8 world, leaders and careerists. Leaders have character, they
9 act for what is right. They would die for their men.

10 Careerists are self-centered, self-absorbed.
11 They act out of selfishness. They sacrifice their men for a
12 promotion. They lie to pump up results.

13 They save their skins instead of others.
14 Careerists cannot really lead because their men don't trust
15 them and won't willingly follow.

16 The correct answer for a leader is clear. You
17 cross the border. You destroy the enemy to protect your
18 people. You then take personal consequences to your career,
19 knowing you've violated an order, but you acted for what is
20 right.

21 You take pride in the consequences.
22 Everyone's a leader or isn't. It's not rank, it's character.

23 Here's my question for you. Are you right now
24 in your life on a self-preservation mission fueled by fear?

1 Or are you on a God-glorifying mission fueled by faith? This
2 is not a fight for this room. It's a fight that must go to
3 the State. Say no, and let's together put this back in the
4 lawmaker's hands.

5 Ms. Stellato, yes, there are 200 staff that we
6 need to pay, but there are 1,500 students that we need to
7 give an education. I understand what we're asking you guys
8 tonight, but it all starts here.

9 You know, last week we saw Randolph County
10 voted down. You've got the chance tonight. I'm not saying
11 it's going to be easy. What we're doing now is not
12 sustainable.

13 I understand the positions you guys are in,
14 but if we don't stand up and band together, with the other
15 rural counties in this state, nothing's going to change.

16 well, I think we have some lawmakers'
17 attention. You know, we're told that they have legislation
18 written to put a moratorium on these school closures until we
19 can reevaluate the school funding.

20 It's going to take a lot of work. The Governor
21 would have to call a special session for that to be seen.
22 You know, it's not a great outlook on that yet, but once you
23 do this, there's really no going back.

24 We know how the State Board stance on it. I

1 just ask you to think about, this is our one chance as a
2 county. From here, you know, like Tiffany said, it would,
3 you know, it's a long road to get to where we need to be.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. OTA: Thank you. Next, we have Rachel Hayes,
6 followed by Caitlin Samples.

7 MS. RACHEL HAYES: Good evening. I didn't realize
8 that I was going to feel all these things when I got to speak
9 this evening. I've obviously been before you guys several
10 times. But what Justin had to say just now, first of all,
11 it's a very hard act to follow.

12 Second of all, it was extremely profound and
13 I beg of you to be leaders tonight. I've known most of you
14 almost all my life, and I have watched you be pillars in this
15 community.

16 I've looked up to you, and I'm asking you to
17 do what I know you know is the right thing by these children,
18 the right thing by this county.

19 we need these schools, especially these
20 schools in these outer lying areas. It's not just the
21 children that depend on it. It's the community. It's the
22 county that depend on it.

23 we need you now, in this moment, to stand up
24 and do what you know you need to do.

1 I know you have a huge decision before you
2 tonight, and I know my stance on that has probably been made
3 abundantly clear, so I'm not going to labor those same
4 points.

5 Instead, I'm going to ask you to possibly
6 discuss and consider a third option. This kind of piggybacks
7 off of what Tiffany said. I had no idea she was going to
8 speak on the same thing, but it's my understanding that a
9 state policy waiver is going to be considered at the next
10 State Board meeting.

11 So I would ask that you entertain the option
12 of tabling the closure and consolidation until a decision can
13 be made closer to the cutoff, if the cutoff is extended.

14 I know this is a long process. I know we're
15 all exhausted, but we've done everything we've had to legally
16 up to this point.

17 You've heard everything that we've had to say.
18 I don't see a harm in tabling this for the time being so that
19 we can exhaust absolutely every possible avenue of relief in
20 this situation.

21 Please give us every fighting chance possible.
22 If you're not ready to make a decision yet, then table it
23 until you are ready to make a decision or until closer to the
24 cut-off date because there may be things that happen in the

1 legislative session or at the State level that would give us
2 some reprieve here.

3 I'm just asking that, one, you have courage;
4 two, you be a leader; and three, that you give us the best
5 fighting chance possible.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. OTA: Thank you. Our last speaker is Katelyn
8 Samples.

9 MS. KATELYN SAMPLES: Good afternoon. My name is
10 Katelyn Samples.

11 I am a student at Marshall University in my
12 junior year. I am a Roane County graduate. I am a student
13 at Marshall University in my junior year. I'm a graduate of
14 the class of 2023 from Roane County.

15 I'm also a graduate from Geary Elementary
16 School, the class of 2018-2019. I come to you with nothing
17 prepared tonight.

18 I have bullet points on my notes app on my
19 phone. I'd like to direct your attention to this side of the
20 auditorium for a minute.

21 My sister, Stephanie Calvert, and I put
22 together a display of backpacks tonight. By no means is this
23 103, but these backpacks are a representation of the children
24 from the Geary Elementary Middle School District that will

1 not have a bus running their route if this consolidation is
2 made.

3 when you make this decision tonight, I want
4 you to think about these children. Think about the children
5 that will not have a way to get to school. Education is a
6 basic human right.

7 with this consolidation, that right will be
8 ripped away from 103 children, just from the Geary Elementary
9 Middle School District, not considering Walton.

10 I don't know what their bus routes look like,
11 but consider that. The financial decisions that were made
12 that got us to this point were not our students' fault.

13 So why are they being punished? Why are they,
14 why are these children being ripped away from the only
15 community that they have ever known?

16 I drove here tonight from Huntington, West
17 Virginia. Geary, my alma mater, middle school, means
18 everything to me. When this situation first began, I gave a
19 speech via Microsoft Teams about the feeling of home and
20 community.

21 Tonight I want to touch back on that. Geary
22 Elementary Middle School is the heart of our community. I
23 attend as many events as I possibly can for this school, not
24 because I am obligated, but because I feel I want to be

1 there.

2 Anyone who steps into this building knows that
3 these walls are a feeling of community and home that no other
4 place can even come close to.

5 with this consolidation, it's ripping these
6 kids away from their community. I know that community. I
7 know the home feeling because I was once a student there.

8 Ms. Tanner, Ms. Claypool, I know that you guys
9 feel it too. You have an opportunity tonight to save the 103
10 kids that are not going to have a way to get to school.

11 They're not going to have a right for an
12 education. A basic human right. You know what to do.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. MACE: Okay, we'll move to new business for
15 consideration of potential action. The first item there is
16 the update on the Roane County Schools State of Emergency.

17 Ms. Stellato, would you like to present?

18 MS. STELLATO: Yes, as a standing agenda item, I
19 want to, obviously, we're definitely following along more
20 closely during this phase of our state of emergency progress.

21 Just so everyone is clear, we do -- we are
22 required to return to the December 10th State Board meeting
23 to give an official update on the progress that we've made to
24 date.

1 If you haven't listened to any of the
2 hearings, I just want to remind everybody that some of the
3 specifics that the reason that we're in this position to
4 begin with, was due to a declining enrollment, failure to
5 approve a consolidation plan last year, lack of sufficient
6 personnel action, other operational decisions, which also
7 included budgeting deficiency and an over the limit over
8 state funded formula personnel, amounts of personnel that we
9 were carrying at the time.

10 Where we are, I am pleased to report that the
11 special education audit has started, and we are in the
12 process of that. I believe it wraps up next Wednesday, the
13 12th, with the closure exit.

14 So we should have an update to the Board on
15 the special education audit for our November 20th meeting.
16 Obviously, this part of tonight is the end of the formal
17 process required by 6204.

18 We have completed all five hearings. We have
19 run our official legal notices in the paper, and so tonight
20 we are at the decision-making process on that.

21 I've asked Mrs. Hardman if she would like to
22 speak specifically to an update on our finances in this
23 section of the evening.

24 Ms. Hardman. I will pass this mic down for

1 you.

2 MS. HARDMAN: Good evening. Good evening. If you
3 could each take one of those, each handout.

4 I've written some things down because I didn't
5 want to forget anything or get any of my numbers wrong. So
6 I'm just going to read from this.

7 If it were only a matter of paying down a \$1.4
8 million deficit, that would be one thing. And I would be
9 encouraging the Board probably not to close these schools.

10 I think we could probably come up with a way
11 to fix this, given enough time from the State. But the harsh
12 reality is this, for the current school year that we are in,
13 we have made all the cuts that we can make.

14 we have combined positions. We have teachers
15 teaching two different subjects. We have teachers going
16 between schools to cut down on the personnel that we have.

17 Someone stated during the hearings that it
18 looked like most of our savings will come from personnel
19 costs. Of course, they're going to come from personnel.

20 That represents 80 plus percent of our budget.
21 So when we try to cut the budget, that's going to be a
22 significant amount.

23 But there are some things that I want you to
24 know. and that you have to keep in mind. We have used all

1 this year of the \$362,169 of bus replacement money allotted
2 by the state, \$40,000 of our \$65,000 allotment for school
3 supplies, \$47,284 of the textbook allotment, and \$128,246 of
4 the technology allotment on personnel costs.

5 That is \$577,699 of money that should be spent
6 for other desperately needed items for this school system.
7 And even dedicating those funds to our personnel costs, when
8 this year's budget was prepared, we still have a negative
9 budget balance of \$490,789.

10 We're still going that far, we're projected to
11 go that far into the hole. We could not, with all of the
12 cuts and all of the changes that we've made in taking all of
13 these extra money from all of these places, we could not
14 balance the budget this year by operating schools the way
15 that they are currently operating.

16 Since then, since this budget was prepared, we
17 created a school secretary position, an ECAT aide at Geary,
18 an ECAT aide at Spencer Elementary, a half-time itinerant
19 special ed teacher at Geary, an itinerant special ed teacher
20 at Walton, a temporary itinerant aide-2 at Spencer Elementary
21 School, and an itinerant special education teacher at Spencer
22 Elementary School, two temporary itinerant aides, aide-2s, at
23 Roane County High School, and a multi-classified aide/bus
24 operator position that will result in added overtime.

1 All but one of these positions were enrollment
2 driven and outside of our control. We had to have these
3 positions.

4 This is the second year that we haven't spent
5 any bus replacement money on replacing buses. According to
6 Mr. Garner, next year, we will not have a choice but to use
7 that money the way it is intended.

8 We cannot go another year without replacing
9 some of our bus fleet. According to Mrs. Brown, we currently
10 have 631 iPads that will have to be replaced next year.

11 They are already or will be out of warranty
12 and nearly obsolete. And when I say obsolete, I mean that
13 they are coming close to not being able to run the
14 educational software that we're using.

15 We also have 188 MacBooks in the same boat.
16 To replace the iPads, the cost is going to be \$388,152. To
17 replace the MacBooks, the cost is \$165,252. That's a total
18 technology expense of \$553,404 for next year, just to keep
19 our students operating with the technology that they need.

20 The deficit is catching up with us. Our cash
21 flow has been insufficient to cover payroll twice since
22 January 1st of this year. And I know a lot of people think
23 that because we are State Department personnel, that they
24 will cover us or help us out if we can't make our payroll.

1 We have been told by State Department
2 officials, that will not be the case. If you don't think
3 that government employees can be cut off, take a look at your
4 federal employees for the last few weeks. It can happen.
5 And if we don't have teachers that are being paid, they're
6 not going to come to work.

7 So we wouldn't be able to keep the schools
8 open anyways. So I just want you to be aware, wand look at
9 the big picture.

10 I know that the public has asked you to look
11 beyond the numbers, but the numbers that you have in front of
12 you are too large and too important to just set aside.

13 We have to find a way to take care of the
14 numbers in front of us. If you look at this page that has
15 the numbers on it, that list the first number is the deficit
16 at the end of FY-25.

17 We have to find a way to come up with that
18 money. Something that we've not talked about is the fact
19 that we are required to have to keep in our reserve 3% of our
20 total revenue budget.

21 For this year, that is \$572,486. The deficit
22 projected for this year is \$490,789. The estimated cost of
23 these positions that we've created due to enrollment is
24 \$519,582.

1 I've already told you the bus replacement we
2 will have to use for buses, so we will not be able to use
3 that for personnel next year. That's \$362,169.

4 The estimated technology replacement costs are
5 \$553,404. All of those together represent the amount of
6 money that we have to find. \$3,884,892 is what we have to
7 find to be operating within the parameters that we are
8 supposed to operate.

9 The last thing, if you will look at the
10 spreadsheet that I gave you, the spreadsheet that I have on
11 my computer is too large to print on one page. You wouldn't
12 be able to see it all.

13 So if you take the first page and put it on
14 the left, and the second page and put it on the right, this
15 is the cash flow analysis that I do each time that we write
16 checks.

17 It shows where we are and the projections of
18 where we should be at the end of the year. If you will take
19 a look, we start going under in February, then we come back
20 out of it at the end of February, and then we go back in the
21 hole in March.

22 At the end of the year, our cash flow analysis
23 shows for right now -- and this is a projection based on what
24 we expect to spend each month -- but it shows us in the hole

1 \$418,000.

2 Now, things can happen. We can get some
3 grants, or we can have some state money come in, or we could
4 have a boiler system blow up at one of the schools. But for
5 right now, if nothing bad happens and nothing extra comes in
6 and this is kind of, I have budgeted in some extra tax money.

7 The last few years, we've gotten extra tax
8 money above what we expected to get. That's already factored
9 in here.

10 So I just wanted you to see where we are right
11 now as far as our cash flow. That's money in the bank.
12 That's what we use to pay our bills.

13 The projection at the end of this year right
14 now is a negative \$418,000. And that's what I need you to
15 know.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. MINNEY: Did that take into consideration the
18 position we're asked to create tonight?

19 MS. HARDMAN: No. Because you haven't agreed to
20 that. So I did not put it on there.

21 MS. STELLATO: One more point of clarification,
22 Mr. Garner raised, is that it also does not take into account
23 the continued decline in enrollment.

24 MS. HARDMAN: And that's true.

1 Our state aid funding is set for this year,
2 but for next year, it isn't.

3 MS. STELLATO: Questions from Ms. Hardman before I
4 move on?

5 Okay, the final thing I'll say before we go
6 into official deliberations is, you know, I appreciate, first
7 and foremost, I appreciate everybody that showed up to do
8 this with us.

9 This has been a long journey and you're right,
10 whoever said it, you have families and you have lives and you
11 have committed to being here with us and engaging in this
12 conversation, and helping us to think and continue to
13 consider.

14 Several positive ideas have come out of these
15 conversations and these discussions that I do believe will
16 help us as we continue to move forward.

17 Ms. Raines commented that the same conditions
18 will still exist regardless of what the outcome is tonight.
19 And as Ms. Hardman just painted a picture for us, it's
20 getting worse, right? It's getting worse.

21 Mr. Shears' comments spoke directly to my
22 heart, right, in that he said that courage is the backbone of
23 leadership, and that gentleman asks if they should stay or
24 stop or go.

1 I asked my team twice, at least twice, in a
2 formal setting, what are we going to do? Are we going to go?
3 Are we going to stay? What's the direction that we're going
4 to go?

5 It was unanimous, when we looked at the facts
6 and we looked at the findings and the direction of the
7 district, what would happen if we didn't make a move.

8 As Ms. Hardman has pointed out, we 100% are on
9 the verge of going over the cliff. And so, you know, are you
10 going to cross the border to protect your people? We made
11 that decision right away. It's not a popular decision, as
12 evidenced by the outpouring of, and rightfully so, of
13 negativity towards making these decisions.

14 I have been very clear that I agree, and that
15 I would be with you. I, however, have no desire to take this
16 district into an ambush that I cannot control or that we do
17 not retain some sort of decision-making power in the process.
18 That would be a poor decision on my part.

19 And to your point, about 1,500 kids that need
20 to get an education, they have assured me, and I am assuring
21 you, that that is what we will do. We will find a way to
22 give 1,500 kids an education. It's not going to look the
23 same.

24 Even if the answer tonight is to keep the

1 schools open, I need people to hear me say, the schools will
2 not look the way that they look today. It cannot happen. We
3 can't operate.

4 Now, it might be close to your home, and as
5 we've said earlier in hearings, there have been some great
6 ideas that come up, and I've said that we are willing to
7 assist and investigate the charter process, which could
8 happen after the vote to close goes forward.

9 We, I believe there's viability and a viable
10 option in that. We've also decided on a whim to host a
11 statewide funding formula work session that we're going to
12 hold at Geary School Monday, November the 17th.

13 You can't expect change to happen if you're
14 not willing to take a leap of faith and try to do it
15 yourself. And so that's what we're going to do.

16 We don't know if anybody's going to show up to
17 our work session on the funding formula, but we're at least
18 going to say that Roane County contributed to the
19 conversation and was willing to move the needle forward.

20 SES and SMS principals as well as Mrs. Hunt
21 have assured us that the children's education would be
22 paramount in all the decision making that we're doing, and
23 that we have teams in place at all of the schools, in
24 addition to the staff that we're going to bring with the

1 children from Walton and Geary should this go forward to
2 ensure that we can provide the children with a high quality
3 education, and that we are making sustainable decisions for
4 the future of all Roane County schools and all of the
5 children that have yet to come.

6 You know, I just, all I will say is that the
7 State Department has promised us support in navigating this,
8 but if we choose not to close these schools and we choose to
9 go a different direction, it is very clear that they may have
10 to intervene and they may have to make the decision for us.

11 So I just want the record to reflect that as
12 the Superintendent of Roane County Schools in order to
13 preserve the future of Roane County Schools for all children
14 and to provide a high quality education for all students, it
15 is my recommendation that the Board adopt the motion as
16 written by this leadership team and myself to move forward
17 with the closure and consolidation given the financial
18 picture that we are facing.

19 MR. MACE: Thank you, Ms. Stellato. Anyone else
20 from your staff would like to speak?

21 MR. GARNER: Jerry Garner. I'll answer any
22 questions if you have questions about facilities and
23 transportation. If any Board members have any questions that
24 they need to know about transportation facilities, if you've

1 got any questions about enrollment or anything, I'd be glad
2 to entertain those.

3 MR. MACE: Okay, Board members, we're at this
4 point moving to item 2 under new business. Here we will talk
5 about deliberation. We'll open this up. I know some Board
6 members have prepared statements and would like to address
7 the public.

8 I think that's proper at this time. We'll
9 open that up. Would the principals please pass the recorded
10 mic down? We're on. Thank you.

11 MS. EILEEN RICHARDSON: This is Eileen Richardson.
12 Okay, can you hear me? I'll try to speak loud. All right, I
13 wrote things down because I was afraid I would forget when I
14 got up here. So pardon me if I have to refer to my notes.

15 I want to thank you all for attending this
16 meeting and all the other meetings that we have had. And I
17 hope that you will continue to attend our meetings and ask
18 hard questions, because that's the way we're going to get
19 things done correctly.

20 As we have said many times, none of us want to
21 close these two schools. I think from discussions with
22 everyone here, that nobody really wants to do that. But we
23 have to make a decision, and it's going to be a hard
24 decision.

1 I haven't heard anyone from the county who
2 wants to close the schools either. But I think the public
3 needs, has a right to know why we vote the way that we vote.

4 These are some ideas that I had, some notes.
5 If we close the schools now, there is no coming back from it.
6 whatever we get is what we will have from now on. If we wait
7 a year and try to get back on track, it will be very
8 difficult.

9 But there is hope, there's a possibility that
10 it could happen. whatever we do, we're going to need your
11 help and your understanding when we make hard choices.

12 The way we are losing students every year, we
13 will need help from the community in the form of a levy, if
14 we decide not to close the schools.

15 otherwise, we will be looking at consolidation
16 next year. Most counties close schools because of old
17 buildings. Our buildings are in good condition. I think it
18 would be a shame to sell them for pennies when they are worth
19 millions.

20 Some people are talking about buying these
21 schools and opening their own school. That would be
22 difficult for them to finance, but it would also be difficult
23 for the public schools because of so many students taken from
24 our numbers.

1 I think it would be best to come together and
2 work out a plan that will save us money next year. It will
3 be painful. We will have to cut a lot of programs that we
4 are used to having.

5 But if we work together, the pain should not
6 last too long.

7 MR. MACE: okay, thank you, Ms. Richardson. Okay,
8 Mr. Minney, do you have a statement?

9 MR. JAMES MINNEY: All right, I am James Minney,
10 Vice President of the Board. I've been saying for quite a
11 while, if anybody has listened, that the State legislators
12 are destroying our rural county schools.

13 There's no accountability for home schools.
14 Some students are getting an education, but there's others
15 that are not getting any education. I've seen them
16 personally myself, and it's actually sad.

17 with the other options that people have, and
18 I'm not against options, that they're taking the kids out of
19 the rural county's school system. The State is losing
20 population, the county is losing population, yet the
21 legislature makes it easier to take our kids out of public
22 schools.

23 County schools are closing left and right
24 throughout the state. There's not enough money to keep them

1 open.

2 Towards the end of COVID, when we was having a
3 school Board training session down in Charleston, a State
4 legislator made a statement when we were short of teachers
5 during the COVID era, that we don't have a shortage of
6 teachers. We have too many schools.

7 I knew that rural counties were in trouble
8 when I heard that statement. That's been about three years
9 ago.

10 During this process, and I'm not talking about
11 just our public comment process, but when we found out that
12 we were deeply in trouble, I believe some of the Board
13 members, some of the staff, and even our Superintendent have
14 been unfairly called out.

15 We're in this together, and I don't think it's
16 appropriate to call out certain individuals. It's been
17 implied that there's been some backroom negotiation, pressure
18 put on Board members to vote in favor of closure.

19 As far as I know, there's been no such
20 pressure applied to the Board members, and there's been no
21 such pressure applied to me.

22 The State has laid out their recommendations
23 for us. They have gave us assistance, with advice. Twice
24 they have advanced us with State aid, and they're providing

1 training for our staff.

2 I also want to make it clear, I have had no
3 other conversations with Board members or the Superintendent
4 in which way I am going to vote tonight. So there's no, you
5 know, backroom negotiation on how I'm going to vote, and I
6 have not had that conversation with other Board members, so I
7 don't know how they're going to vote.

8 I just want to make that clear to the people
9 out there, so you understand that.

10 It's been implied that money has been stolen.
11 The Board stole the money. The county study group and our
12 State audit did not find any money that was stolen.

13 The money was all spent in Roane County
14 Schools. I just want everybody to understand that because
15 I'm still hearing that the money was stolen in all ways. As
16 far as I know, no money was stolen. It was spent in Roane
17 County Schools.

18 Sometimes we might have voted with our hearts
19 and not our minds, but the money was spent in Roane County.

20 During the public comment session, it was
21 mentioned many times that Board members were asked to check
22 out the bus routes that were going to be affected.

23 I was asked to speak up, but it was not my
24 time to speak. It was your time to speak, the public's time

1 to speak. The members of the Board have been on most of
2 these bus routes that have been affected.

3 This was long before school closure was being
4 talked about. I have rode quite a few buses myself. The
5 buses that I have rode, the drivers are professional.

6 I have gave a report at each Board meeting
7 after I've rode each bus. They are professional, the ones I
8 have rode. The troublemakers are made to sit up front or
9 they're made to sit apart, and most of the time the little
10 kids are separated from the bigger kids.

11 From what I have seen, when I have rode the
12 bus, I would have no problem with putting my kids on one of
13 these buses. Yes, they're going to be a long bus ride.
14 There's no doubt about that.

15 I want to thank the staff for all the hard
16 work that they have done on this closure process. And I also
17 want to thank all the employees within the school system that
18 have voluntarily switched positions to help save the county
19 money. They didn't have to do that. They have voluntarily
20 moved so that we can switch and save money around in
21 different locations.

22 The last thing I want to do is, I want to say
23 that I'm proud of the people of this county. We had two
24 speakers, well, we had one speaker from outside the county

1 that spoke very well of us. And I appreciate that.

2 One speaker asked twice that we say the Lord's
3 Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. And that's something I
4 would like for us to look at, to go ahead and say that even
5 during special meetings.

6 We had one speaker that used her five-minute
7 time to actually lead us in the Lord's Prayer and pledge
8 allegiance.

9 I was very impressed with the kids that spoke
10 and the speakers that spoke from the heart and maintained
11 their respect for the process.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. MACE: Thank you, Mr. Minney. Okay, Mr.
14 Harper.

15 MR. DARIS HARPER: My name is Daris Harper. I'm
16 sure most of you know me.

17 So we've heard a lot of talk the last couple
18 months about mismanagement of funds and the Board done this
19 and the Board done that.

20 I personally want to say I probably voted some
21 times that I should not have yes on some things. I'm also
22 saying that I'm not sure I was aware of all the information
23 that I was given.

24 I'm not trying to make myself look any better

1 than anybody else sitting up here. We are all a team. We
2 all work together pretty good.

3 But at the end of the day, here we are in this
4 deficit. As you heard the numbers that were presented this
5 evening, I mean, it sounds very dire.

6 I know Randolph County was mentioned earlier,
7 they're in a little bit different situation than we are.
8 They are five million to the good right now. So that's, I'm
9 sure it was a big factor of why they voted not to close.

10 None of us want to close these schools. I too
11 have ridden the bus, and it would be a long bus ride. I'm
12 the only one that has a kid in the school system here, and
13 I'll be honest, I wouldn't put her on the bus for that long.
14 She's six years old.

15 But at the end of the day, decisions have to
16 be made that none of us like. This leadership team and Ms.
17 Stellato, sounds like to me are united.

18 You know, I mean, they're united with what
19 needs to happen, but none of them want to do it, just like we
20 don't. No one intentionally spent funds wrong.

21 If you don't believe me, you can call me
22 later. We can talk after a while, and I'll give you any
23 answer that you want.

24 I think I've talked with several of you out

1 there and answered your questions. But we have an obligation
2 to pay the employees and to give the kids an education.

3 You are correct, Justin, but I firmly believe
4 with the principals and the staff in this county school
5 system, they will get an education.

6 There are going to be a lot of different
7 things you know with the buses and some mental health issues
8 probably, and I think you know that's -- they're well aware
9 of that as well. We all are.

10 But at the end of the day, like I said, these
11 these employees need to get their paycheck and I don't see
12 another way of doing it. I mean there's been several options
13 that I've gone over in my mind, and a lot of people say
14 there's been one option, but there's been several.

15 If we vote not to close, I'm afraid there
16 won't be nothing for our kids to enjoy at school.

17 You know kids enjoy music, art, phys ed. The
18 high school kids, we have a wonderful FFA program. You know,
19 but those are all things that can be cut, and I'm probably
20 sure will be cut.

21 I can't speak for certain. But so it's going
22 to affect those kids as well. So it's going to affect what we
23 do either way; neither way, there's a good solution.

24 But I hope that you guys will stand with us

1 and help us through this. And I know it's not easy. I have
2 dreaded this day for months. But like I said, I feel like I
3 owe it to our kids and to the staff, you know, to get their
4 paycheck.

5 And we've been told that it will not happen a
6 third time. I've actually called the State Department myself
7 and they reassured me that that was not an option.

8 They also told me their beliefs on how things
9 are and what needs to happen.

10 So I have to rely on the things that's been
11 presented to me, the leadership team, the State department to
12 make my decision. I'll be honest, it's a hard decision and
13 I'm not sure that I've made it until I vote here in a little
14 bit.

15 I will tell you, I'm a federal employee and I
16 haven't worked for 37 days. I haven't gotten no check, and
17 it's not fun. Every school personnel, they'll be wanting a
18 check.

19 So if we don't close and that happens, we have
20 200 and some employees, I'm assuming, that's going to be real
21 upset. Or if your kid can't go to music or can't go to FFA
22 competitions, you want to be upset about that.

23 I mean, you can't please everybody. Lord
24 knows that I have tried in my life, and that has not

1 happened.

2 I don't know, I could talk all night. I could
3 talk all night, but just know this decision is not like, we
4 do not take this lightly.

5 My mother never talks to me about -- we never
6 talk about business usually or anything, but I talked to her
7 today on the phone, and she said, Daris, she said, boy, I
8 sure hate to see you all in close.

9 She said, that's where all my family went. So
10 how can you go against your mom, right? There's tough
11 decisions, guys. There's tough decisions.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. MACE: Thank you, Mr. Harper. Mr. Carpenter?

14 MR. DENNIS CARPENTER: I do have a written thing
15 because my wife said if I tried to just speak off the cuff, I
16 would never stop. so I am going to read it.

17 My name is Dennis Carpenter, for anybody that
18 may not know me. I'm in the last year of my term on the
19 school board.

20 I've been associated with Roane County Schools
21 since 1957, I believe it was, when I entered Walton
22 Elementary as a first grader.

23 I graduated from Walton High School in 1969.
24 I have worked in all our schools since January 1st, or January

1 2nd of 1974,

2 I began teaching at Reedy Elementary in the
3 old building. I've worked in eight different schools
4 connected to Roane County in my tenure. I have coached
5 community-based and school-based athletic teams.

6 I'd like to take a few minutes to discuss
7 where we are in our public schools in Roane County, and
8 briefly how we have gotten to this point and the necessity to
9 consider closing these two schools.

10 I think most everyone can agree that declining
11 enrollment has contributed greatly to our financial
12 situation, along with some important financial decisions that
13 have managed to lead us to this point to a \$1.5 to \$2.5
14 million deficit.

15 I can recall one vote that I would have
16 changed had I known the actual results of that vote, and that
17 is when we, the School Board, voted to add another \$1 million
18 to be able to build the new Spencer Middle School.

19 I did ask the question at the time, is adding
20 a million dollars going to be what bankrupts us? And the
21 answer was, no, if we're careful.

22 If I had the opportunity, I would change that
23 to a no vote. During my tenure, I have advocated that we
24 need to try to solve the mystery of why so many people, so

1 many parents, have decided to homeschool their children or
2 transfer.

3 what are we, the schools, looking at to keep
4 children enrolled in our schools? I think we need to
5 identify why people have chosen homeschool over public
6 schools.

7 I believe the answer lies in many who have
8 lost trust in our schools and leadership. I have also had
9 many questions about why are we losing so many staff members?
10 why are they leaving?

11 The response, of course, has always been,
12 they're going for more money in another district. I do not
13 buy that theory. I think that our staff members have not
14 felt appreciated or treated as members of the team.

15 we need to do a much better job identifying
16 why we're losing students and staff to other districts or
17 homeschool while trying to solve those issues. I do not
18 believe that anyone has done anything on purpose, or
19 intentional to put us in these dire financial straits.

20 I believe we and the county leadership have
21 made some poor decisions. We have been encouraged not to
22 look back, but as a history teacher, I believe if we don't
23 look back and analyze, then we are doomed to make the same
24 mistakes in the future.

1 I believe the situation we're in today is the
2 most tragic situation in Roane County Schools' history where
3 the possibility of putting kids on the bus for one hour and
4 cutting routes short is a tragedy and should not have to
5 happen.

6 However, we as Board members took an oath of
7 office to uphold the West Virginia Constitution, and in my
8 opinion, that means the laws of West Virginia, and that we
9 are bound to follow those laws and State Board policies.

10 We have not been directed by Charleston to
11 consolidate. But it is highly, highly recommended. And even
12 the people in Charleston are bound to follow the approved
13 laws and policies of the state, as are we.

14 I assure you, as we prepare to vote here
15 tonight, there has been no predetermination by this Board.
16 In fact, this Board has not, as a group, had time to formally
17 discuss consolidation other than hear the proposal to begin
18 to study consolidation and to formally begin the state-
19 mandated processes, the impact statement, due to timelines
20 involved.

21 I have no idea how the other Board members are
22 going to vote tonight. The laws of West Virginia prohibit us
23 from discussing issues that could come to a vote in either
24 private or in a public meeting unless the agenda says that we

1 can discuss the issue.

2 Therefore, as we prepare to vote, I hope that
3 all Board members vote their conscience and vote with our
4 interpretation of the law and policies and not just vote from
5 what we feel in our hearts.

6 I know no one, including the Superintendent
7 and her staff, really want to close or consolidate.

8 I certainly believe with the hiring of Ms.
9 Stellato that we have or are starting to see a change in the
10 morale of our staff, and hopefully after we get through this
11 nasty consolidation discussion, that we can begin building
12 trust within our communities and that everyone will truly
13 believe that the Board, all central office, and school
14 administrators truly do have students' best interests at
15 heart in every decision made.

16 Looking back, I was asked by several people to
17 run the school Board three and a half years ago to help
18 create a more positive environment for our students and
19 staff.

20 I will be voting tonight basing my vote not
21 just from my heart, which I am not a fan of consolidation.
22 But remember, we are obligated to follow rules, laws, and
23 policies as established by our legislature, our State Board
24 of Education, and even previous members of this Board of

1 Education.

2 I truly believe that as a Board member, I have
3 failed the voters of Roane County, the people who voted for
4 me, and that I didn't ask enough tough questions and fight a
5 little harder to do things different in some situations.

6 After tonight's vote, I hope that our county
7 can come together, can heal our relationships, and find a way
8 to do better for our students and communities.

9 My tenure on the School Board will end on June
10 30th, and I hope that whoever replaces me will fight hard to
11 help right the ship that is being left.

12 Thank you. Oh, one last statement I'd make.
13 The easy way out would be for us to all vote no, don't close.
14 Let the State come and do it. That would be the easy vote.
15 But is that the right vote?

16 MR. MACE: Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Okay. My
17 name is Jeff Mace. I'm the Board President. I want to thank
18 Ms. Stellato and her staff for their tireless effort and the
19 work put in over her very short tenure so far.

20 She was brought into a very difficult
21 situation by this Board and has handled it admirably, and her
22 staff and her staff in a together very had to get into here
23 very quickly to begin processing a very difficult situation.

24 Also want to thank all of the principals for

1 all the schools that we were visited for the hearings. These
2 are not easy undertakings. You can see we don't have a large
3 staff. They're all here tonight.

4 The leadership team, they're all at this table
5 and have been for five previous years. And they've been
6 willing to answer all the questions. I also want to thank
7 everyone that's come out, all of the members of the public
8 that have spoken.

9 I think including our teachers at our schools,
10 they've presented, and they've spoken professionally.
11 They've spoken from their heart, and I think they have spoken
12 and everyone has spoken with the best interest of Roane
13 County students.

14 I want to thank you, the citizens, the public,
15 for coming out. It is the letters that we've received, the
16 conversations that we've had, the phone calls.

17 It is your devotion to the children,
18 regardless of what school they're in, gives me hope, okay?

19 I'm going to go off the cuff because I think,
20 and kind of driven by maybe Mr. Shears' direction toward the
21 military, and I'm not a military personnel, so don't hold me
22 to this.

23 But I do believe that the adversary tries to
24 divide. That is the one way that they can be defeated very

1 easily is to take your forces and be divided into small
2 groups.

3 And the adversary will do that. That is the
4 main point. I said from the beginning, when we had these
5 issues, there's not a day goes by in the last 15 to 18 months
6 that I have not questioned things that I have done, this
7 Board has done.

8 I don't think any member of this Board up here
9 would all say, they would all say the same thing. This is a
10 very difficult time.

11 These, the heartfelt appeals from parents in
12 these areas not lost on me. Twenty years ago we moved our
13 family back here for the very same purpose, to raise our
14 family. be closer to our family, and let them grow up and in
15 the Roane County school system.

16 It's breaking my heart because we've done
17 those very things. I, like Mr. Carpenter, and I think all
18 Board members I acknowledge the failures of this Board vote
19 collectively and mine individually.

20 I'm sitting here taking full responsibility.
21 The other easy way would have been just to give it up and
22 walk away from it.

23 Every Board member here tonight stayed,
24 understood the situation and has devoted themselves to a

1 corrective action. None of us are happy with the one that is
2 presented to us tonight.

3 I'm bound by my oath, bound by my duty to the
4 whole county, all students, staff, and citizens of Roane
5 County, to do my part in providing and ensuring a thorough
6 and efficient public school system.

7 That's hard. That's hard to do in the system
8 that we are expected to do it in today. I'm frustrated, just
9 like many of you. I've heard Mr. Shears, Mr. Boggs, Mr.
10 Hall, all from the Geary area, but they've wanted to stick
11 out for coming and at their frustration as they look at the
12 public school system as a whole. Yeah, it's difficult.

13 It's a frustrating ordeal if you're here, if
14 you're working as a Board member as well. I agree that the
15 public school system is failing rural counties. It has been
16 for a long time. We've known it. It's broken. It's broken.
17 You have to navigate a broken system.

18 It is not equitable for rural counties.
19 Mainly because we operate under a financial formula that is
20 antiquated and developed in the 1990s and focuses on total
21 student enrollment in the county, not the school enrollment,
22 not the geography of the school, not the road maps or the bus
23 routes.

24 It only takes into account how many kids you

1 have in the county. The formula, it's enrollment and
2 resource driven. Meaning x number of students gets you x
3 number of dollars, gets you x number of teachers and
4 personnel. It doesn't take into account the need. It's law.
5 The formula incentivizes cutting jobs and closing schools.

6 The formula does exactly what it's meant to
7 do. It needs modernized. It needs to focus on need. We do
8 that with achievement. We're expected as a Board on
9 achievement.

10 We have to address students with needs. There
11 are several individuals at this table tonight that are tasked
12 with that, making sure every child gets an education in Roane
13 County, regardless of their economic status, their mental
14 health.

15 They all get those services, and we have to
16 provide them. So we're not, as a district, we're not
17 permitted to allow students with additional -- sorry, I lost
18 my train of thought.

19 The school formula does not address those --
20 the heartstring topics that we brought up. It's not there.
21 It's sterile. When you talk to individuals in the State
22 Department, and I'm not criticizing.

23 This is just what where they are. If they are
24 -- they are doing their job and leading the way the formula

1 and the policy directs. why is that all important?

2 Rural and small districts require more funding
3 to achieve outcomes and achievements. That's why it's
4 inequity. There are more of those in West Virginia than
5 there are prosperous counties that have means.

6 That number grows every day. Counties that I
7 would have never thought talking about enrollment problems
8 and funding problems I watch in the news pop up every week.

9 Rural and small counties can't spread their
10 costs across a large number. Therefore, those funds, that's
11 why our numbers look so bad when you're looking at teacher-
12 student spending ratios.

13 The more students you lose, the worse that
14 ratio looks. The fallacy in the formula is that as
15 enrollment declines, the costs do not necessarily decline
16 either, especially if you're in a rural setting.

17 It doesn't account for grade level impact. It
18 doesn't take that into account. Closures in the 1990s and
19 2000s when we were -- that was probably the last big flux of
20 closure, you're talking about high schools and middle
21 schools.

22 You could argue that some of those had some
23 redeeming qualities. Some of those schools got more programs
24 or got access to more extracurricular.

1 Closures of the 2020s is in elementary
2 schools. Our legislators have to be woken up. I don't see
3 one. I don't know if there is one.

4 I know members of this Board meet and speak
5 regularly to them, not just recently, for their entire tenure
6 on the Board.

7 This is what we've argued for years not just
8 recently, not just since we took on a financial burden, but
9 since we knew we were -- this would be at a day to come when
10 there would not be enough students to support the expense of
11 our school.

12 There's not a lot been spoken but the school
13 voucher program, I call it the school voucher program because
14 that's what it is. It's not a scholarship. Nobody has to
15 have a great resume in order to get the Hope Scholarship.
16 It's a voucher program.

17 It's predicted to be \$245 million of the
18 budget. It's been projected that 10% of those actually can't
19 afford that offering type of education. Some of you have
20 asked, and I'm just trying to go through some of the
21 questions, things that, you know, what brought us to this
22 point?

23 June 6th of 2025, the state superintendent
24 recommended that we be placed on a state of emergency. Took

1 that to the state school board. Gave us until, we were going
2 to be given until December to come up with a plan.

3 On July 9th, the state school board looked at
4 our situation and said, no, come back in 30 days with your
5 plan. This team was expected to put together a plan in 30
6 days to present to the state school board and did that.

7 The time frame was accelerated by the West
8 Virginia State School Board. That's why this got kicked into
9 motion so quickly. The point being is that the direction
10 comes from the West Virginia State School Board to the Board
11 of Education.

12 They have the responsibility for overseeing
13 all local school boards and Board of Education. They are the
14 final authority.

15 If you doubt that, go and look at a case from
16 2017 in Nicholas County, During the 2016 floods, Richwood
17 High School was destroyed. The Nicholas County School Board
18 voted to close that school along with other schools that were
19 damaged and consolidate.

20 It was the West Virginia State School Board
21 that came in and said no. That went to the Supreme Court.
22 The Supreme Court ruled that the West Virginia State Board of
23 Education has the authority to provide a thorough and
24 efficient education for West Virginia. They have that final

1 ruling and authority.

2 The other obstacle that we are facing in
3 public education is a legislature that does not seem to
4 support public education in its laws. This is our law book.

5 To run public education, this is what's known
6 affectionately as §18 and §18A. It's all of these laws to
7 run schools. I didn't bring what it takes to run a charter
8 school, but it's about seven pages.

9 And what it takes to run a homeschool is about
10 a one page. You've probably heard that from President
11 Hardesty, the President of the West Virginia State School
12 Board.

13 It seems to be what they want to push is a
14 regionalization. You hear this, that they are regionalizing
15 school boards. They would like to do that.

16 In other words, go from 55 county boards and
17 consolidate that into smaller groups because that's a cost-
18 saving measure.

19 But we've seen no action to date that would do
20 that. Instead, what it seems to be that the legislature
21 would rather do is let the burden fall to local school boards
22 to make these closure and consolidation decisions and let it
23 die on the vine.

24 And we have -- then we would have

1 regionalization by attrition because citizens would be forced
2 to pick up, drive their kids to other schools, other
3 counties, or invest in private education or charter schools.

4 That's my statement, written statement. My
5 heartfelt statement is I am conflicted every day. Like Mr.
6 Harper, sitting here today, looking for a way to the very
7 last minute to try to come up and see some other alternative
8 to this.

9 It's everything that you have said in your
10 public hearing. It tears communities apart. It is
11 devastating to the children. It forces parents to pick up
12 and make decisions they never thought they would have to
13 make.

14 I feel ashamed every day that I have to make
15 this decision that's not personally, but that is you know and
16 I know some of you are glad that that's the case so but
17 that's okay. I understand.

18 I understand the frustration. If it were me
19 and I were not here I would be on the other side fighting for
20 my schools as well and my community.

21 That's what we expect. What I'm asking is
22 that whatever the decision of this Board, it's going to take
23 that to keep this community and keep this school system
24 moving forward.

1 Because this is not all. On top of what Ms.
2 Hardman has listed there, I think personally, in my opinion,
3 what's looming next that will potentially bankrupt rural
4 counties is special education.

5 There are two laws out there now, both have
6 passed, and one is a student discipline policy, which it
7 sounds really good on paper, but it's going to increase the
8 number of IEPs and 504s, and it's going to increase Mrs. Monk
9 and Mrs. Ash's jobs.

10 They're going to have to add staff, just like
11 we did this year, six positions under. You don't have a
12 choice when you -- it's the numbers. The law says you have
13 to have only so many cases per individual.

14 And those cases are going to increase. On top
15 of that, the new special education -- changes to the new
16 special education law are increasing that as well. There is
17 no adjustment for schools, for rural schools. Everybody has
18 to play by the same rules on that.

19 So again, I don't think like -- I'll just make
20 one other comment that I think was I wanted to bring up as
21 well. There was no Board input no Board members I'm aware of
22 gave any input into the impact statement. That was solely
23 something that is developed by the Superintendent.

24 These things are very legal in their

1 development. we had legal guidance on developing them.

2 Legal guidance was presented to the Board.

3 These Board members in these sessions, this
4 Board does not speak. I know a lot of times you think the
5 five of us are together sometimes. we are only together and
6 only speaking typically when we are in front of you at a
7 Board meeting.

8 That's the only time we can discuss business.
9 The financial situation is, like Mr. Carpenter said, I will
10 admit, there are -- yes question -- like I said before I
11 question every day some of those decisions.

12 Just closing out on that, I want to thank
13 everyone that has spoken. Everyone has contributed tonight.
14 We want to thank the Board members.

15 we have worked as a cohesive group, and I
16 think we are going to need that in the future if we are going
17 to move forward and right the ship. I think that has become
18 the common theme, but not only to right the ship. we're
19 going to need support. Mrs. Stellato's team is going to need
20 support, our schools, our teachers, our principals our
21 students. Our students are going to need a community
22 support.

23 Thank you.

24 Okay we're on item 2, this will be on the vote

1 on the proposed closure of Geary and Walton elementary middle
2 schools and the consolidation of their grades K through 5 and
3 the Spencer elementary and their grades six through eight in
4 the Spencer Middle School, and the consolidation of pre-K
5 students from all schools into the space now occupied by the
6 Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High
7 School.

8 This would include a policy 433-36 waiver
9 request and an amendment of the Comprehensive Educational
10 Facility Plan, CESPs. Anything you want to add to that
11 needing to be on there?

12 The waiver request, Mr. Garner, would you like
13 to speak to what that is, just to make everybody clear.

14 MR. GARNER: In our closure document -- in the
15 closure document, it talks about the waiver policy for 336,
16 dealing with transportation.

17 All 28 routes that we have will need a waiver.
18 It's recommended 30 minutes for elementary kids. I have 15
19 minutes of leeway, which would be 45, and then we grant a
20 waiver that allows me 15 additional minutes to get to one
21 hour to get elementary kids to, if you both close this, to
22 Spencer Elementary.

23 This will reasonably be requested. It's been
24 stated at many of the closure hearings that all of them will

1 be needing that waiver.

2 MR. MACE: And additionally the amendment to the
3 CESP.

4 MR. GARNER: Going through our 2020 to 2030
5 comprehensive education facilities plan, there are different
6 places that talk about the grade configurations at the
7 school, what has been budgeted, how much repairs would be,
8 renovations to buildings and stuff if you approve the
9 consolidation.

10 We will just have Spencer Elementary School
11 being K to 5. You will have Roane County High School picking
12 up the preschool part and maintaining their 9 through 12.
13 And then you would have Spencer Middle School being your only
14 6 to 8 school.

15 So any place it mentions Walton Elementary
16 Middle School or Geary Elementary Middle School will have to
17 be taken out because if you approve the closure, they will no
18 longer exist.

19 And the sections related to those, renovation
20 costs, improvements, all that would be taken out of the plan.

21 MR. MACE: Okay, Board members, that will be a
22 motion for you. We need a motion.

23 MR. MINNEY: Mr. President, I'll make a motion
24 that we call on the Superintendent's recommendation. Read

1 the motion.

2 Mr. President, I move that the Board approve
3 the closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and the Walton
4 Elementary Middle School and to consolidate their grades K
5 through 5 into Spencer Elementary and their grades 6 through
6 8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of the
7 pre-K students from all schools to the space now occupied by
8 the Office of Student Support Service at Roane County High
9 School to be effective at the end of the current 2025 through
10 2026 school year, and the Superintendent on the Board's
11 behalf timely request that the West Virginia Board of
12 Education approve these actions and the Superintendent on the
13 Board's behalf timely submit to the West Virginia Department
14 of Education a request to amend the school district's
15 comprehensive education facility plan and request for a
16 waiver to policy 4336.

17 MR. MACE: Motion has been moved. Do I hear a
18 second?

19 MR. CARPENTER: Second.

20 MR. MACE: Motion by Mr. Minney, second by Mr.
21 Carpenter. Any further questions or discussion?

22 MR. MINNEY: Yes. On the comprehensive plan, I had
23 my notes, but apparently I left them at the house as I was
24 going over there. But as I went over there, I noticed that I

1 believe Walton and Geary were still listed a couple times.

2 And my other question was, it didn't seem to
3 be any changes to the number of students that were located at
4 these schools. Do we need to change the location of what
5 would be currently, or the current data that we have?

6 MR. GARNER: Enrollment numbers are what is below
7 each school's name from 2020. It's the 2020-2030. So the
8 enrollment numbers you see in there are what we had at those
9 times, not current.

10 MR. MINNEY: Okay, so, but what came in my mind if
11 we're closing two schools, and it's basically Spencer
12 Elementary School, the number of students are going to be,
13 way a lot more than they were listed in the plan.

14 So when somebody sits down, say, from the
15 state, and they're looking at the plan, are they going to be
16 looking at old data for that particular school? Or do they
17 need to be seeing the current data, that current data we
18 currently have, when they're looking at that, say for future,
19 whatever, money for facilities or whatever?

20 MR. GARNER: All the estimates and the
21 comprehensive facility plans are based on 2020 dollars, what
22 it would cost to renovate at that time. You simply see
23 strikeouts. For example, Mr. Minney, I think you said you
24 didn't have it on, but on page 14 of the comprehensive

1 facilities plan, it says the 2020 organizational plan will be
2 as follows. And this is the 2020 plan, and I just simply
3 struck out the school, Geary Elementary Middle School, PK to
4 8, struck it out and wrote the word closed.

5 Same thing for walton Elementary Middle
6 School, struck out those wording and wrote that were closed.
7 And for Roane County High School, I just simply added with a
8 pre-K center.

9 MR. MINNEY: Right, I've seen that, but there was
10 on the other pages for Geary, I know for sure walton was
11 still listed on other pages on that. And like I said, I had
12 them all wrote down, the pages, but apparently I did not pack
13 those up to bring them. So it might be something that you
14 need to look at and see if you need to strike something else
15 out there.

16 MR. GARNER: Okay, did that page happen to have in
17 a classification column?

18 MR. MINNEY: I don't remember.

19 MR. GARNER: Mr. Minney, would you like to look
20 into the plans?

21 MR. MINNEY: Yeah, I can look at it.

22 MR. HARPER: will we not approve this plan ahead
23 of sending it to Charleston?

24 MR. MINNEY: This is just requesting to change it,

1 but don't we have to get the final document and approve it?

2 MR. GARNER: I think Mrs. Stellato has gave you
3 the changes necessary so you can base your vote based on the
4 changes.

5 MR. MINNEY: On page 50, 58, or sorry, 53, you got
6 pre-K schools there, and you got Geary pre-K through eight
7 schools access control. That's what I'm asking. When you
8 still have Geary and Walton in these locations, do they need
9 to be struck out?

10 MR. GARNER: Okay, where it says access controls,
11 this is going to the safe schools entrances, and we actually
12 did the safe schools entrance. So those monies were already
13 spent.

14 MR. MINNEY: Right, I understand that also, but
15 all I'm asking is do they need to be struck out where they're
16 still listed?

17 MR. GARNER: No, because that money was part of
18 the bond money actually was used for that.

19 MR. MACE: Okay. Board members, any further
20 questions or discussion?

21 MR. MINNEY: Mr. Garner, for parents that the bus
22 is not going to drive by their current pickup site anymore,
23 do they have options like carpooling with one parent and
24 maybe if they have a -- larger vehicle that can pick up their

1 neighbors and actually get paid for that. Is there anything
2 like that in the law that they can do that?

3 MR. GARNER: Well, there's two avenues, which
4 would require over 2 miles of distance. As a Board, we need
5 to be, or you need to determine what the reimbursement rate
6 will be. Currently, it's \$1.60. You may want to see to
7 increase that.

8 But a parent would be paid that amount for
9 however many kids they had in the system. If they had three
10 kids, it's three times 160 or \$4.80 a day. In the past, like
11 going back to 2018, we had contract drivers doing three
12 different routes. that we paid an individual that had a
13 larger vehicle, like we're talking about, that had a
14 chauffer's license, that had insurance, and was required to
15 be tested, not DOT tested, because they don't have a CPL, but
16 to have drug and alcohol, be on a random cycle, like our
17 regular bus drivers are, to come in and make sure all that,
18 we did pay them under a contract, but all those students
19 lived over 2 miles.

20 MR. MINNEY: Right, so there is a process for
21 that.

22 MR. GARNER: There is a process, yes, sir.

23 MR. MINNEY: Is there any other options that
24 parents have for along that line that will alleviate some of

1 these over 2 miles or even if they're under?

2 MR. GARNER: If they're under 2 miles, that would
3 just be parents talking to other parents. Hey, can you help
4 me out on this thing? We cannot compensate. There's nothing
5 in a rule that says we can compensate them.

6 MR. MACE: Board members, any further questions?

7 MR. HARPER: Yes, the chauffeur you were talking
8 about. That's for all students, even if they're under 2
9 miles, correct? They can still like, they ride a van? Or is
10 that just a two-mile? When I was in school, for like Slab
11 Fork, Charles Fork, Round Mile, there was a van that went and
12 picked up those children.

13 MR. GARNER: Right, we had a contracted driver who
14 did Round Mile, picked up students, and brought back in.
15 Now, did that contract driver, if there was room, pick up a
16 kid that was within the two miles? Maybe. But she just got
17 paid a flat rate every day when she drove the route, both
18 morning and afternoon, was paid that amount under a contract.

19 We had one on Round Knob. We had one that did
20 Pine Grove out in the Geary area. We had another one that
21 was also out in the Geary area that met the bus on Mueller.

22 People who lived up past Mueller were brought
23 in also. So there was two out in the Geary area and there
24 was one here in town on Speed Road where Round Knob is.

1 MR. CARPENTER: Okay. So with the routes that
2 aren't going to be ran if the closure goes through, is that
3 feasible where a van could pick up all the students like that
4 or is that too far a distance in between them?

5 MR. GARNER: We would have to examine that. Just
6 off the top of my head, looking at a Big Pigeon, there's like
7 five families that live further down that we can't get to and
8 get them into town by time. So we might be able to, but we
9 would have to look at pricing. And it has to do with budget
10 and everything. How much could we compensate one person
11 bringing all those out and meet the qualifications that we
12 need. They got to have the chauffeur's license. They got to
13 have the insurance. And it used to be that it's had to have
14 \$1,000,000 of insurance. Now that's up to \$5 million. So
15 there is a hefty tag to that.

16 MR. CARPENTER: And would that time be included in
17 the hour?

18 MR. GARNER: No, that would not because it's not
19 school bus time. It's something else that's trying to get
20 those kids to the bus stop. So that would be something
21 totally different that would be contracted out. It wouldn't
22 be part of the one hour one.

23 MR. CARPENTER: You don't have an estimate?
24 would you happen to have an estimate on what the contracted

1 for all the kids that are -- we're not going to go pick up
2 next year?

3 MR. GARNER: Probably you haven't calculated. I
4 was just wondering if you might have. We have not ran any
5 calculations since 2018 when we had them and the
6 Superintendent at that time did away with them.

7 MR. MACE: Any further questions or discussion,
8 Board members? Okay, hearing none, we have a motion on the
9 floor. We'll be voting for the closures. Yay or nay? All
10 those in favor indicate by saying Aye. Those opposed?

11 That motion carries four to one. Okay, we
12 stand in recess.

13 (Hearing concluded.)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,
COUNTY OF ROANE, to wit:

I, Donna H. Miller, Notary Public in and for the State of West Virginia, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that the foregoing Special Meeting of the Board of Education was duly taken by and before me, under the West Virginia Rules of Civil Procedure, at the time and place and for the purpose specified in the caption thereof.

I do certify that the said hearing was correctly taken by me by means of the Stenomask; that the same was transcribed by me, and that the said transcript is a true record of the hearing.

I further certify that I am not connected by blood or marriage with any of the parties to this action, am not a relative or employee or attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of such attorney or counsel, or financially interested in the action, or interested, directly or indirectly, in the matter in controversy.

Given under my hand this 20th day of
November, 2025.

Donna H. Miller
Notary Public

My commission expires December 12, 2028.

1413 Henry St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

October 7, 2025

Dear Roane County Board of Education:

I am a Geary ('94) and RCHS ('98) alumna. I am writing to urge you to **vote no on the Geary and Walton Elementary Middle School consolidation proposal**. I live in Michigan now, but I have listened to the Board meetings focused on the consolidation and read the impact statement. I still have family in Southern Roane County and visit often. I have four major concerns with the proposal that I detail below.

First, the bus ride times in the impact statement appear to be fantasy. Take Grannies Creek (my old route) as an example. One can barely by car, with no stops, complete the route in the time listed in the impact statement (57 minutes). Three generations of my family rode the bus from Upper Grannies to Spencer for high school. It was an hour and a half ride each way and that was before the recent change which sends the bus up Hollywood, tacking on extra time for Grannies Creek kids. I cannot find any explanation in the impact statement for how the bus times were calculated. Before you even consider voting yes, you should personally ride the buses from deep in the hollers to Spencer to investigate the times in the impact statement. The community deserves the truth and full transparency about what is being proposed.

Second, consolidation will harm generations of children. If you vote yes on the proposal, you are sentencing even the smallest children to a 2.5 hour-plus commute each day, for 14 years of their education. For the 100+ children whose houses the buses will no longer come to, you're also making huge assumptions that their families have reliable transportation and that their parents' work schedules can accommodate meeting the buses. Even those who can make it to Spencer will be exhausted by the commute, which will harm their attendance, well being, and academic development. I was a co-valedictorian in my graduation year at RCHS and eventually earned a doctorate from Harvard. I raise this not to brag, but because my four years at RCHS were the most exhausting of my entire 23 years of formal education. I had to pull long hours with little sleep to compete with the town kids. It is one thing to put such a commute on a teenager for four years. It's quite another to do so for a preschooler for 14 years. Further, how are Geary and Walton kids ever to take advantage of extracurriculars? It is completely unreasonable to expect families to tack on a two-hour-plus round-trip commute to Spencer and back for after-school activities. The impact statement is silent on this issue, with zero mention of reinstating activity buses to ensure full access for Geary and Walton children.

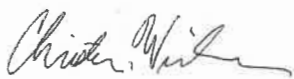
Third, the consolidation will cause deep, irreparable damage to the Geary and Walton communities. The research is clear: closing rural schools leads to community economic declines,

fraying of social ties, and falling property values.¹ The Charleston-Gazette's award-winning *Closing Costs* series from 2002 also showed that in West Virginia, consolidations did not save money but had many negative impacts for children.² Geary and Walton have been the central gathering points for their communities for generations. There simply is no substitute in either community. Further, Geary is actually the best located school in the county, just 10 minutes from the I-79 interstate. Many of us from the Geary area have long felt that the future of Roane County will someday be in our area, that the proximity to I-79 and Charleston is a boon for the county. But if there is no school at our end of the county, this will sabotage the potential the area has.

Finally, there are other options for addressing the deficit. As Superintendent Stellato explained in a recent Board meeting, just two of those options – eliminating all but required music, art, and PE classes and delaying new textbook adoptions – would together result in a savings approaching \$1 million per year. Are those options optimal? Of course not. And I say that as someone who considers band from 4th to 12th grades one of the very best parts of my education. But the alternative options are far, far preferable to the irreparable damage these consolidations will do. It's baffling that the Board has not explained to the public why these other options are not on the table. Why make Geary and Walton alone bleed? The crisis is due to fiscal mismanagement and overspending and not to enrollment drops. Further, a levy is much more likely to be successful if Geary and Walton stay open and it is targeted to restoring music, art, and PE than if consolidation proceeds. The Board and the Superintendent have lost a great deal of trust in the County. Keeping Geary and Walton open will help restore trust and make other funding options more viable.

In close, despite what the impact statement says, **this is no “opportunity” for Geary and Walton kids, families, and communities.** It's not even clear there are any financial benefits to be had, as so many families will leave for Big Otter, Clay, Clendenin, and home schooling. **This is a tragedy, but it's one that you have the power to stop. Vote no on the Geary and Walton consolidations.**

Thank you,



Christina Weiland (Geary '94, RCHS '98)

¹ See: Eddins, M., Pehrson, M., and Burgess Smith, K. (2024). *Revisiting Research on School Closings: Key Learnings for District and Community Leaders*. Pennsylvania Clearinghouse for Education Research. <https://www.researchforaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/revisiting-research-on-school-closings-key-learnings-for-district-and-community-leaders.pdf>; Howley, C., Johnson, J., and Petrie, J. (2011). *Consolidation of Schools and Districts: What the Research Says and What it Means*. National Education Policy Center. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED515900.pdf>; Smith, S. A., & Zimmer, R. (2022). *The Impacts of School District Consolidation on Rural Communities: Evidence from Arkansas Reform*. Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. <https://edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai22-530.pdf>

² See: https://www.wvgazetteemail.com/news/special-reports/closing-costs/article_c049f56b-639e-5621-809e-c994c7008505.html and <https://wvpublic.org/story/wvpb-news/school-consolidation-failed-to-live-up-to-its-promises/>

Please help us the parents and families of the southern part of roane county out i have already been in contact with Patrick morrisey and he has agreed with everything I have said why close geary elementary roane county board of education is already complaining about decline in enrollment i will say this the roane county board done it to themselves a million dollars for furniture for the new middle school in Spencer and hundred grand on the toilets for the new school was not needed most of the parents filed a lawsuit against the roane county board but if they close geary elementary its going to cause families to move out of roane county which means less money coming into the county its not a win for either side plus they just forked out over five hundred grand into geary elementary within the last five years. Please do the right thing and over turn their decision. I refuse to send my 5 year old to Spencer all the parents from Walton and geary have all said they would homeschooling their kids before sending them to Spencer us parents have agreed to do a protest infront of roane county board of education to get the media's attention. No pre-schooler should have to go to school in the same building as the high school and I refuse to drive my daughter and hour in half away from my house just so she can go to school

Dear Members of the State Board of Education,

I am writing to express my profound disappointment and strong disagreement with the recent decision by my district to directly communicate the potential closure of WEMS/GEMS to students before the process has been officially completed. We were not even given 24 hours to alert our children of their decision.

It is our understanding that the final decision regarding the school's future is still pending a necessary state vote. Until that vote is finalized and approved, this closure is simply a recommendation, not a certainty. Therefore, informing young children about such a major, life-altering event at school, without prior or concurrent notification to their parents, is an unacceptable breach of trust and judgment.

This premature disclosure has created significant confusion, anxiety, and unnecessary distress among our student population. Our children were left to grapple with unsettling news outside the supportive environment of their families, leading to numerous instances of upset and worry that we, as parents, were then forced to address after the fact. We rely on the County Board and the district administration to act in the best interest of the students, and this action failed that fundamental responsibility.

We request an immediate and formal explanation for this communication failure. Furthermore, we demand that all future communication regarding the pending decision be directed exclusively through official parental channels (email, formal letter, or recorded phone message) before any information is shared directly with the students.

We expect the County Board to take full responsibility for the anxiety and confusion caused and commit to correcting these procedures immediately to ensure the well-being of our children remains the top priority throughout this sensitive period. It was completely uncalled for!

Stephanie Cowger

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Wendy Looney and I live in Walton, Roane County, WV. I am in desperate need of any advice/assistance you can give me. As you have probably heard, Roane County has submitted their impact statement to the WV Board of Education wanting to close Walton Elementary/Middle and Geary Elementary/Middle Schools and consolidate K-5 into Spencer Elementary School, 6-8 into the brand-new Spencer Middle School and 9-12 into Roane County High School. They say it is due to declining enrollment and decreased funding. That may be part of the issue, but our local school board and the previous superintendent (our current superintendent was the assistant superintendent at the time) did not help matters with their illegal, unethical and mismanagement of funds.

If the board does choose to consolidate they are not putting the student's best interests first. Spencer schools are not located in the middle of our county. Walton and Geary Schools are 25-30 minutes away. Our children will be on the bus 1 to 1 ½ hrs. each way. This is an unacceptably long commute for students, especially for our little ones.

Research shows that school consolidation rarely delivers promised savings and often harms students and communities. Studies show that student participation and test scores dramatically decrease, lower attendance rates, students receive less individual attention, longer bus rides, harder for parents to be involved in child's education, overcrowding, difficulty participating in extra-curricular activities increased behavioral issues and hurting the students' overall mental well-being.

If they close these two schools, it will be devastating to not only our students, but to our communities. The ends do not justify the means, nor the benefits outweigh the costs. A major disadvantage of consolidation is the loss of identity to the communities. Many communities lack theatres and shopping malls, so athletic events and school-sponsored activities become the key element of the community. Another disadvantage is the economic impact on the community itself. Some of the money saved because of consolidation results from cutting jobs. Small-town schools are often one of the largest employers in the town. Not to mention the businesses that depend on the school employees and parents to stop in and support the local businesses. It will decrease our property values and make people leave the county.

I started a petition last week to not close the schools and consolidate. Currently 264 have signed online and approximately 75-100 on paper copies. Is there any way that this can be stopped? Our local board is all for the consolidation, and it feels like the State board is pushing them. Please let me know if there is anything

we can do, or if there is anything that you can do to help. There are other options. The first public hearing is scheduled for Monday, October 27th. The board will be voting on November 6th.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Wendy Looney

From: WV Board of Education President <president@wvbe.k12.wv.us>
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2025 7:56 AM
To: Darcel Vermillion <dvermill@k12.wv.us>
Subject: FW: Roane County

From: Valerie Mace <vlmace@k12.wv.us>
Sent: Wednesday, September 24, 2025 6:30 PM
To: Chris Stansbury <cstansbury@wvbe.k12.wv.us>
Subject: Roane County

Apologies- I sent the first one from the wrong email.

Dr. Stansbury,

I am certain you receive many emails regarding school consolidations, but I am writing to ask you to take a closer look at the proposed consolidations in Roane County.

This is not your typical consolidation. It will basically disenfranchise the bottom 2/3 of the county. We do have significant financial troubles, but as a teacher at Geary Elementary Middle, I can tell you-consolidation and the closing of two schools will make it worse. We will lose so much student enrollment to homeschooling, virtual, or county transfers that the savings on closure will be all but gone.

Thank you,
Valerie Mace

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S25, an AT&T 5G smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S25, an AT&T 5G smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Hello!

My name is Mary Grace Burdette and I am a proud 2022 graduate of Pikeview High School in Princeton West Virginia, as well as a member of the Marshall University Bachelor of Science in Nursing program class of 2026. I bet you are wondering why someone from Mercer County is emailing board members from Roane County. Well, my loving husband is a proud 2022 graduate of Roane County High School and because of his education that he received through Roane county, he was able to further pursue his education at Marshall University, where we will graduate in May of 2026.

I am emailing you to urge you to reconsider the choice of consolidating Geary and Walton schools. Mercer County made that decision to consolidate in the early 2010s combining five schools into one. Because of that consolidation, Pikeview Middle School was born. Because of this consolidation, bus routes were altered, and elementary, middle, and high school students ended up on the buses together at the same time in the morning. Some kids would catch the bus at 5:55 in the morning and ride to school, where there would then be stops at two different schools to drop off elementary and middle students before high school students. Sometimes the older students would be lucky if they made it to class by 8 AM. In the evenings, school would let out at 2:15 for the elementary school and there would be a bus that ran specifically for them. Then there would be a second bus run that ran for the high school and middle school starting at 3:15 PM. Since I was on the more rural end of the county, I would not get home until closer to 4:30 to 4:45 PM. These bus rides were long and taxing, and I would not wish for any other child to have to have a bus ride this long. If the schools in consolidated in Roane county, some students in your county will have a very long bus ride every day (perhaps longer than mine was.)

In addition to long commute, if schools are consolidated, the classrooms in Spencer Elementary and Spencer Middle School will be further populated, increasing student ratios, in turn, allowing the children in Roane county to not receive as one on one of an education as they would get if Geary and Walton school stay open. I would also be willing to bet that your students' reading and math proficiency scores would go down in elementary school, as well as a decrease in your ACT and SAT test scores in high school, because your students will not be getting as high of quality of education as they were before. I, as a product of Mercer County schools, have firsthand experience with seeing the quality of my education go downhill after consolidation. My classrooms would be packed with an average of 40 students per class during my time of middle and high school. Because of this, it was difficult trying to learn.

The teaching staff and support staff of Roane county would also be affected by this closure if it were to happen. Every teacher, teachers aid, cook, janitor, bus driver, office staff, and administrator would have to be relocated to a different school in Roane county , or move out of the county altogether. I know firsthand seeing the staff of Geary school working with my husband's little sister, that they are very caring and take their job seriously. If you close the schools down, your students in Roane county are going to suffer. High quality educators are hard to come by and your county has been blessed enough to have dozens of wonderful staff members. Let's not forget, if there are staff members that have to go out of county, they will also take their families with them. This will further decrease the number of students in your schools.

Your future student population is also in jeopardy here. Young people like me and my husband would love to stay in Roane County if at all possible. Right now we are in college, about to enter our senior year. We were planning on coming back to Roane County when we graduated, but if you get rid of these schools, I don't think that will be the case. Younger folks like me and my husband will opt for homes within county school systems like those of Kanawaha and Wirt counties. Already, I have heard of parents, pulling their children from Roane county schools, instead opting for other schools on the chance that you decide to consolidate.

Let's also think about the probability that the buildings for Geary and Walton schools can be sold. There is not much demand for large school buildings for purposes other than schools. The buildings are also in decent enough shape to continue operations for years to come. What would happen if the schools could not be sold? Would they just sit on the market for years when their walls could have held the wonderful students of Roane County?

I will end this message with one final plea. Are your children, grandchildren, siblings, nieces, or nephews in school in Roane county? If no, then think about children that you see out and about in the county. Think about them. Think about the quality of education that you would like to see your family & the children of Roane county receive. Also, think about the staff. Would you want to be in their shoes? Possibly losing their paychecks and insurance? I would be willing to bet that if that was you, you too would be screaming from the rooftops to keep the schools open. I am urging you to please advocate against the consolidation of Geary and Walton schools.

Thank you,

Mary Grace Burdette (Lilly)

Pikeview High School Class of 2022

Marshall University Class of 2026