

## Executive Summary

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

**Introduction:** The Randolph County Board of Education respectfully requests approval to close Harman K-12 School and merge it into Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School, and to close North Elementary School and merge it into Jennings Randolph Elementary 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 Randolph County Board of Education requests approval of the following:

- The closure of Harman K-12 School and its merger into Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School. This closure is not contingent on any other actions and is 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. Separate public hearings were held on October 8, 2025, for Harman K-12 School, Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School. The Randolph County Board of Education approved this closure at its October 8, 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.



# Randolph County Schools

"Purpose, Pride, and Perspective"

40 ELEVENTH STREET, ELKINS, WV 26241  
Telephone (304) 636-9150 Fax (304) 636-9157

November 6, 2025

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

Dear Superintendent Blatt:

I am writing this request for consideration of the closure and merger of Harman School located at 22476 Allegheny Hwy., Harman, WV 26270 and North Elementary School located at 410 Kennedy St. Elkins, WV 26241.

Randolph County Schools has completed all steps required for the final closure with Randolph County Board of Education voting in favor of Harman School 4-1 to merge into Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School on October 8, 2025. The Randolph County Board of Education also supported the closure of North Elementary School 5-0 to merge into Jennings Randolph Elementary School on October 8, 2025. All required documentation is contained within the completed closure document.

Randolph County Schools is further requesting approval of an amendment to the CEFP to align with the Board's October closure decision. Moreover, RCS is also requesting approval for the necessary transportation waiver under the provisions of WV. 126CSR92, Policy 4336.

Thank you for consideration of this most important matter. If you need any further information, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shawn Dilly  
Superintendent  
Randolph County Schools

**IMPACT STATEMENT AND SUPPORTING DATA**

**FOR THE**

**CLOSURE AND MERGER OF  
HARMAN K-12 SCHOOL  
INTO  
JENNINGS RANDOLPH ELEMENTARY,  
ELKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL,  
AND ELKINS HIGH SCHOOL**

**CLOSURE AND MERGER OF  
NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INTO  
JENNINGS RANDOLPH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**RANDOLPH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Prepared Pursuant to**

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

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

**Public Hearing Date(s) October 8, 2025**  
**County Board Approval Date(s) October 8, 2025**

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### 3.1. County Procedures

#### *WVDE Application for school closure and/or consolidation*

#### Randolph County

Closure of Harman K-12 and North Elementary Schools and Merger into Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School

Scheduled Date(s) of Hearing(s):

Harman K-12 School	October 8, 2025	Elkins High School Auditorium 5:30 PM
North Elementary	October 8, 2025	Elkins High School Auditorium 6:30 PM
Jennings Randolph Elementary School	October 8, 2025	Elkins High School Auditorium 7:30 PM
Elkins Middle School	October 8, 2025	Elkins High School Auditorium 8:00 PM
Elkins High School	October 8, 2025	Elkins High School Auditorium 8:30 PM

Scheduled Date(s) of County Board Vote(s): October 8, 2025, at 9:00 p.m.

If a public hearing is not completed by 11 p.m., it will be recessed, to be continued on a date and at 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 p.m., whichever occurs earlier.

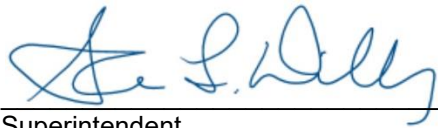
If it is determined that the meeting location is insufficient size, the hearing location is subject to change. Alternate date(s) may be necessary should a hearing require additional time or be unable to be held on the scheduled date due to inclement weather or other factors beyond the control of the county. If, due to inclement weather or other causes, any hearing cannot be held on the scheduled date, the hearing or meeting will be held at the same location and time as originally scheduled, but on October 15, 2025, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

## 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.*



Superintendent

11/6/25

Date

### **3.2. Executive Summary and Impact Statements**

Harman, WV, is a small, rural community where the local K-12 school serves as a central hub for families. Residents frequently travel to Elkins, home to Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School, which shall receive students if Harman School closes. The closure would result in longer bus rides and commutes, but students already engage in some shared activities with those from Elkins. New relationships could form through collaborative extracurricular programs, shared resources, and virtual learning opportunities, fostering stronger ties between the communities.

North Elementary School, located in Elkins, serves as an important part of its community by providing a close-knit environment for students and families. If the school were to close, students would transition to Jennings Randolph Elementary 3.1 miles away, which has the capacity to receive them. While this change would bring some adjustments for families, students already share activities and connections with peers at Jennings Randolph, which would help ease the transition. The closure could also open the door to new relationships through joint extracurricular programs, shared resources, and collaborative school events, fostering stronger ties within the larger Elkins community.

The plan calls for relocating the area's 5th grade classrooms to Elkins Middle School, creating a 5th–8th grade configuration at that site. This adjustment allows for the merger of other elementary schools in the Elkins area, including North Elementary. Elkins Middle School already serves as the receiving school for students as they advance through programmatic levels, and this shift builds upon its established role in supporting transitions from elementary to secondary education.

#### **Enrollment 3.2.a.** (Starting on Page #9)

Since the 2010 census, Randolph County, WV, has experienced a steady population decline, which has significantly impacted student enrollment in Randolph County Schools. In 2010, the county had 29,360 residents, but by 2020, this number had dropped to 27,892—a loss of 1,468 people, or a 0.5% annual average decline. This downward trend is projected to continue, with estimates for 2029 predicting a further population decrease to 26,138, representing a loss of 1,754 residents from 2020 to 2029.

The shrinking population correlates closely with a drop in student enrollment. For example, during the 2014-2015 school year, Randolph County Schools enrolled 4,065 students. By the 2024-2025 school year, that number had decreased to 3,436, reflecting a 15.5% decline in enrollment over the decade. This parallel decline underscores the urgent need for strategic planning to address the challenges posed by decreasing enrollment and the changing demographics in the county.

In alignment with the Economy of Scale guidelines set by the West Virginia School Building Authority and the State Department of Education, Randolph County Schools must address these trends. From 2010 to 2022, the county's population grew only twice, with its largest increase (0.4%) occurring between 2012 and 2013. The most significant population drop occurred between 2019 and 2020, when the county lost 2.7% of its residents. On average, the population shrank by 0.5% annually during this period.

Notably, the population's composition is shifting. The percentage of children aged 0 to 4 declined from 5.1% in 2010 to 4.7% in 2022, while the proportion of residents aged 65 and older increased from 17.9% to 22.7% during the same period. By 2022, Randolph County's population had dropped to 27,600, a 6% decrease from 2010. This is in contrast to the national growth of 7.7% and West Virginia's overall population decline of 4.3%.

The combination of declining population, shrinking school enrollment, and an aging demographic highlights the need for thoughtful, forward-looking solutions to ensure that Randolph County Schools continue to provide high-quality education amid these challenges.

*Data retrieved from USA Facts/US Census Bureau*

### **Facilities 3.2.b** (Starting on Page # 13)

Harman School was originally constructed in 1950 with additions in 1970 and 1980. The building has been well maintained but needs some renovations. The building does contain an area condemned for access due to major structural concerns. All the roofs need to be replaced. Exterior windows and doors need to be replaced. A safe school entry needs to be constructed. Plumbing and electrical upgrades are also needed. The building is not sprinkled. There have been recent HVAC upgrades made to the school.

North Elementary School was originally constructed in 1976 as a one-story 30,337 square foot structure with one addition in 2003 for 600 square feet for a total square footage of 30,937. The structure is load bearing masonry, slab on grade, steel joist roofing system with direct glued membrane being last replaced in 2000. Although the school is well maintained there are several systems that are failing.

### **Finance 3.2.c.** (Starting on Page # 19)

In an effort to provide an equal and quality education for each student in Randolph County the board proposes to consolidate services. This closure and merger would save the Board of Education \$1,678,251.50 annually. Savings in personnel are key as student to teacher ratios are inequitable across the county. The county would also realize savings in utilities and maintenance/other costs.

### **Personnel 3.2.d.** (Starting on Page # 23)

Harman School employs one administrator, ten full-time professional staff and one half-time professional staff, six full-time and two half-time service employees and one full-time counselor, and they share a nurse with other schools. North Elementary employs one administrator, fourteen professional staff, twelve full-time service employees, one full-time counselor, and they share a nurse with other schools. Jennings Randolph Elementary employs one administrator, fourteen professional staff, eleven full-time service employees, one half-time service employee, one counselor, and they share a nurse with other schools. Elkins Middle School employs three administrators, thirty-eight full-time professional employees, two counselors, one nurse, and fourteen service employees. Elkins High School employs three administrators, forty full-time

professional employees, one half-time professional employee, two counselors, one nurse, and sixteen service employees.

After the closure of Harman School and North Elementary School, the projected staffing change could include adding ten and a half professional employees and ten and a half service employees at Jennings Randolph Elementary. No additional staff would need to be added for Elkins High School. Fifth grade teachers would be transferred to Elkins Middle School, adding four additional teachers for this closure. As for the completion of the impact documents, no staff members at Harman School or North Elementary School have submitted retirement paperwork for the 2025-2026 school year. If personnel reductions become necessary, they will be handled through the reduction in force procedures outlined in West Virginia Code §18A-2-7.

### **Student Transportation 3.2.e.** (Starting on Page # 27)

Randolph County Schools currently has three school buses that serve Harman School. All three routes will see an increased ride time to their new schools. This increase will range from 13 minutes to 44 minutes of increased time. The district is prepared to make the addition of a 4<sup>th</sup> bus route, which will allow for two of the buses to be dedicated to middle/high school students and two buses to be dedicated to elementary students. The addition will be based on enrollment, need, and efficiency. Randolph County Schools will continue to analyze the bus routes to make them as efficient as possible. Randolph County Schools will be requesting a waiver of the WVDE Policy 4336 for recommended travel times.

Randolph County Schools currently have three school buses that serve North Elementary School. All three routes would be modified to make the routes more efficient and within the required time frame. There are two buses that serve the middle and high school students from the North Elementary area. The district is prepared to modify these routes or add another route to make these routes more efficient.

### **Student Educational Program 3.2.f.** (Starting on Page # 30)

Randolph County Schools ensure an engaging educational environment for learners focusing on teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The mission of Randolph County Schools is to prepare today's learners for tomorrow's demands. We believe that by setting high expectations, providing high-quality instruction, and creating safe and engaging learning environments, we can help students to become well-rounded, life-long learners prepared to function in a global society.

Harman School students will have access to an expanded curriculum and specialized staffing in classes with their grade-level peers when they merge with Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School. Instructional programs will be enhanced with full-time staff in both the arts (music and visual art) and preschool. In addition, students will have the ability to take advanced courses in grades 9-12 beyond those offered within the core educational program.

North Elementary School students will have access to all elementary curriculum offerings in classrooms with their grade-level peers at Jennings Randolph Elementary School. Instructional programs will be enhanced with the addition of full-time visual arts.

**Community 3.2.g** (Starting on Page # 33)

According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Harman, WV, in Randolph County was 126. There are 55 households, with only 10 (18%) having children, a 12% decrease from the previous census. The community has few remaining public businesses, including a U.S. post office and Harman School, a K-12 institution.

As the population has decreased, so has the enrollment at Harman School. In the 2013-14 school year, enrollment was 170 students, but it has steadily declined. As of the 2024-25 school year, Harman School's enrollment stands at 105 students, reflecting a 38% decrease from 2013-14.

North Elementary School has seen a decline in enrollment. In the 2013-14 school year, enrollment was 283 students, but it has steadily declined. As of the 2024-25 school year, North's enrollment stands at 201, reflecting a 29% decrease from 2013-14.

### 3.2.a Student Enrollment

County Procedures

#### Enrollment and Population Table

*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
<b>Total</b>	4060	4048	4040	3949	3866	3789	3623	3634	3532	3487

Enrollment Table 1 – West Virginia Department of Education ZOOMWV

*Trends in student population growth or decline in the attendance area of the school targeted for closure or consolidation for the previous 10 years.*

#### **Harman K-12 School**

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Total</b>	155	156	166	170	164	152	144	130	125	105

Enrollment Table 2 – West Virginia Department of Education ZOOMWV

#### **North Elementary School**

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Total</b>	262	249	254	256	223	212	195	213	189	201

Enrollment Table 3 – West Virginia Department of Education ZOOMWV

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

#### **Jennings Randolph Elementary School**

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Total</b>	278	276	286	271	259	245	223	251	229	211

Enrollment Table 4 – West Virginia Department of Education ZOOMWV

#### **Elkins Middle School**

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Total</b>	629	631	605	635	612	623	566	569	600	615

Enrollment Table 5 – West Virginia Department of Education ZOOMWV

#### **Elkins High School**

Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Total</b>	833	822	823	796	798	795	792	783	740	747

Enrollment Table 6 – West Virginia Department of Education ZOOMWV

**Randolph County**

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Population	29432	29388	29519	29405	29126	29006	28785	28823	28695	28387
Births	303	332	310	334	285	285	317	261	288	259
Deaths	362	355	389	345	374	366	355	353	383	391

Enrollment Table 7: Data provided by the latest data available from the WV Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health - Heath Statistics Center

**Age Composition**

Year	<5	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	>85
2011	1508	3146	3513	3374	3796	4528	4294	3003	1540	703
2012	1508	3146	3513	3374	3796	4528	4294	3003	1540	703
2013	1508	3146	3513	3374	3796	4528	4294	3003	1540	703
2014	1508	3146	3513	3374	3796	4528	4294	3003	1540	703
2015	1533	3033	3447	3470	3408	4018	4243	3560	1686	728
2016	1577	2980	3416	3487	3350	3923	4243	3568	1745	717
2017	1492	2997	3294	3504	3318	3856	4180	3589	1844	711
2018	1455	3015	3314	3546	3264	3770	4152	3620	1960	727
2019	1513	2956	3271	3530	3223	3680	4146	3647	2000	729
2020	1389	2893	3273	3500	3196	3574	4064	3669	2081	748

Enrollment Table 8: Data provided by the latest data available from the WV Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health - Heath Statistics Center

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

**Harman K-12 School**

Year	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034
Grade K	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 1	8	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 2	5	8	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 3	9	5	7	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 4	6	9	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 5	13	6	8	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 6	11	12	5	8	4	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 7	6	10	12	5	7	4	4	3	3	3
Grade 8	11	6	10	9	9	8	4	3	3	3
Grade 9	10	10	5	9	9	8	8	3	3	3
Grade 10	9	9	10	5	9	8	8	8	3	3
Grade 11	4	9	8	9	5	8	8	8	7	3
Grade 12	8	4	8	8	9	5	8	8	7	7

Enrollment Table 9 Data from RCS 2<sup>nd</sup> Month Report Data utilizing cohort survival ratio projections.

**North Elementary School**

Year	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034
Grade PK	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	11	10
Grade K	35	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	11	10
Grade 1	29	33	16	15	14	13	12	11	11	10
Grade 2	38	27	31	15	14	13	12	11	11	10
Grade 3	27	36	25	29	14	13	12	11	11	10
Grade 4	28	25	33	24	27	13	12	11	11	10
Grade 5	39	26	24	31	22	25	12	11	11	10

Enrollment Table 10 Data from RCS 2<sup>nd</sup> Month Report Data utilizing cohort survival ratio projections.

**Jennings Randolph Elementary School**

Year	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034
Grade K	21	20	20	19	18	18	17	17	16	16
Grade 1	22	20	20	19	18	18	17	17	16	16
Grade 2	33	21	20	19	18	18	17	17	16	16
Grade 3	37	32	21	19	18	18	17	17	16	16
Grade 4	46	36	31	20	18	18	17	17	16	16
Grade 5	26	45	35	30	19	18	17	17	16	16

Enrollment Table 11 Data from RCS 2<sup>nd</sup> Month Report Data utilizing cohort survival ratio projections.

**Elkins Middle School**

Year	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034
Grade 6	214	195	196	192	199	183	173	166	165	159
Grade 7	205	206	188	189	185	191	177	166	160	159
Grade 8	196	198	199	181	182	178	185	170	164	158

Enrollment Table 12 Data from RCS 2<sup>nd</sup> Month Report Data utilizing cohort survival ratio projections.

**Elkins High School**

Year	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034
Grade 9	204	204	181	178	182	181	175	169	163	158
Grade 10	174	200	200	178	175	179	178	171	165	160
Grade 11	185	170	196	196	174	172	175	174	168	162
Grade 12	185	182	167	192	192	171	168	172	171	164

Enrollment Table 13 Data from RCS 2<sup>nd</sup> Month Report Data utilizing cohort survival ratio projections.

## **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.*

Randolph County Schools uses the Cohort Survival Ratio Technique for enrollment projection. The enrollment data source for all schools is taken from the second month report submitted to the West Virginia Department of Education. Enrollment data has been kept in the reporting for the past ten years and it assists in making future projections. Resident live births and computation of survival ratios are also considered for enrollment projection.

### 3.2.b. Facilities

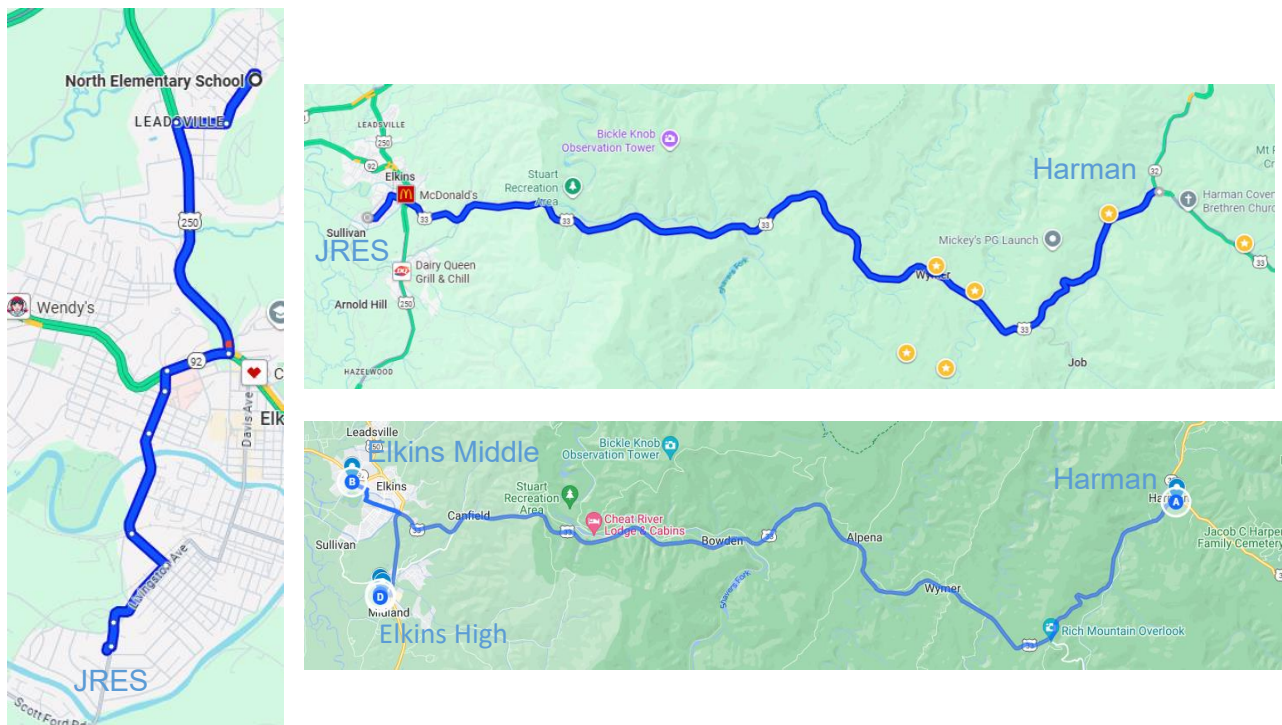
County Procedures

#### 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.

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

#### Insert Map



Map 1

School	Grade Config.	Enrollment Before/After Action	Utilization Before/After Action	Distance to Harman School	Distance to Jennings Randolph	Distance to Elkins Middle	Distance to Elkins High
Closing School Harman	K - 12	Before – 100 After – 0	Before – 27% After - 0%	NA	30 Minutes 23.8 Miles	31 Minutes 23.9 Miles	31 Minutes 23.7 Miles
Receiving School Jennings Randolph Elementary	PK - 4	Before – 202 After - 368	Before – 50% After – 64%	30 Minutes 23.8 Miles	NA	4 Minutes 1.5 Miles	N/A

Receiving School Elkins Middle	5-8	Before – 572 After - 771	Before – 61% After – 64%	31 Minutes 23.9 Miles	4 Minutes 1.5 Miles	NA	9 Minutes 3.7 Miles
Receiving School Elkins High	9-12	Before – 738 After - 740	Before – 67% After – 70%	31 Minutes 23.7 Miles	N/A	9 Minutes 3.7 Miles	NA
Closing School North Elementary School	PK-5	Before – 187 After – 0%	Before - After- 0%	N/A	8 Minutes 3.1 Miles	6 Minutes 2.5 Miles	N/A
Receiving School Jennings Randolph Elementary School	PK-4	Before – 202 After - 368	Before – 50% After – 64%	30 Minutes 23.8 Miles	NA	4 Minutes 1.5 Miles	N/A

*Facilities Table 1 Data pulled from 8/25/25 enrollment data.*

## 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.*

### Harman School

Harman Elementary/High School was originally constructed in 1950 with 28,225 square feet; the first addition was added in 1970 with 1,500 square feet and the second addition was added in 1980 with 5,855 square feet for a total square footage of 35,580. The structure is load bearing masonry, slab on grade, steel joist roofing system with ballasted membrane roofing on original structure which was replaced in 1982 and rolled roofing on remaining roof was updated in 1978. All the roofs need to be replaced. Although the school has been well maintained there are improvements that need to be made to the structure.

The site consists of 4.68 acres of which 4.68 acres is useable and is not compliant with current recommended acreage guidelines. However, the site has the availability to expand. The site is 85% in the 100-year floodplain and 15% out of the 100-year floodplain. Bus loading/unloading is inadequate as well as lighting and parking lot size. Playfields/play courts are in good condition. The school's electrical and mechanical systems are adequate for supporting the current operational needs.

The cost to bring Harman School up to code is \$ 3,795,127.25.

### Elkins Middle School

Elkins Middle School was originally constructed in 1954 with 51,282 square feet as a three-story structure. The first addition was added in 1976 with 12,567 square feet, the second addition was added in 1984 with 3,710 square feet, and the third addition was added in 1991 with 15,296 for a total square footage of 82,855. The structure is load bearing masonry, slab on grade, steel

roof structure with mechanically fastened membrane roofing which a portion of original roof was replaced in 2009. The school has been well maintained for its age.

The site consists of 6.628 acres, of which 6.368 acres is useable and is not compliant with current recommended acreage guidelines. However, the site has the availability to expand. The site is 100% out of the 100-year floodplain. There are drainage issues that need resolved, bus loading/unloading and parking are below average. Parking is directly off public roads. The playfields/play courts are in good condition.

A full roof replacement has been completed in September 2025. The roof projected also included new LED lighting and ceiling tiles throughout much of the school. The school's electrical and mechanical systems are adequate for supporting the current operational needs.

The cost to bring Elkins Middle School up to code is \$ 2,866,885.35.

### **Elkins High School**

Elkins High School was originally constructed in 1994 as a two-story structure with 162,370 sq. ft. with no additions, however, there is a connector to between this structure and the Technical Center. The building is masonry constructed, which has been cleaned and sealed in 2019 but will need new control joints and repair existing facade deterioration. The roofing was replaced in 2019, and a new HVAC and cooling tower was provided for the gymnasium and auxiliary gym. The school has been well maintained.

The site consists of 46.932 acres of which 46.932 is usable and is compliant with current recommended acreage guidelines. The site is 100% out of the 100-year flood plain. Bus loading/unloading of students is off a county road. There is adequate lighting and parking for visitors, staff, and students. The playfields/play courts are in above average condition. The school's electrical and mechanical systems are adequate for supporting the current operational needs.

The cost to bring Elkins High School up to code is \$ 11,441,004.88.

### **Jennings Randolph Elementary**

Jennings Randolph Elementary School was originally constructed in 1976 as a one-story 36,135 square foot structure and has no additions. The structure is load bearing masonry, slab on grade, steel joist roofing system with a direct glued membrane that was last replaced in 2010. A full HVAC replacement was completed in 2023.

The site consists of 5.239 acres of which 5.239 acres is useable and is not compliant with current recommended acreage guidelines. The site is in a residential area and not conducive to expanding. The site is 100% out of the 100-year floodplain. The site is well organized with bus loading/unloading and parking is excellent with adequate lighting. The playfields/play area are in very good condition.

The cost to bring Jennings Randolph Elementary up to code is \$ 6,116,590.78.

### **North Elementary School**

North Elementary School was originally constructed in 1976 as a one-story 30,337 square foot structure with one addition in 2003 for 600 square feet for a total square footage of 30,937. The structure is load bearing masonry, slab on grade, steel joist roofing system with direct glued

membrane being last replaced in 2000. Although the school has been well maintained there are several systems that are failing. The school needs a full HVAC system replacement.

The cost to bring North Elementary up to code is \$6,190,802.58.

### **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 regarding the school(s) adaptability to the present and proposed educational programs, and the provisions of related student services.*

Harman School, a small K-12 institution, offers a limited range of educational programs and services due to its size and rural setting. The designated receiving schools, Elkins Middle and Elkins High, are more adaptable to current and future educational programs, with greater resources to support a wider variety of academic offerings, including advanced courses, vocational programs, and extracurricular activities. These schools also provide additional student services, such as special education, counseling, and health services, supported by specialized staff. The receiving schools are well-equipped to accommodate the transitioning students, ensuring they have access to diverse educational opportunities and necessary student services.

North Elementary, located within the city of Elkins, provides a supportive learning environment but has experienced declining enrollment in recent years. With the potential closure of the school, students would transition to Jennings Randolph Elementary, which is in close proximity and already shares many community and student connections. Because of this, the change would result in minimal disruption for families. Jennings Randolph Elementary is well-equipped to adapt to current and future educational programs, offering a full range of academic opportunities, specialized staff, and student services, including special education, counseling, and health supports. The transition would ensure continuity of care while providing access to expanded educational and extracurricular opportunities in a familiar setting.

### **School Enrollments, Capacities, and Utilizations**

<i>School</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Building Capacity</i>	<i>Utilization %</i>
Closing School Harman	100	395	25%
Closing School North Elementary	187	350	53%
Receiving School (Jennings Randolph Elementary) (Projected #)	368	405	91%
Receiving School (Elkins Middle School) (Projected #)	771	1012	76%
Receiving School (Elkins High School) (Projected #)	740	1123	66%

1Facilities Table 2 Data pulled from 8/25/25 enrollment data and RCS’s CEFP

## 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.*

Harman School has long provided dedicated support to its students, including those with disabilities, within the close-knit environment of a small K-12 setting. However, due to its size, the range of services and facilities available is naturally more limited than in larger schools. The receiving schools, Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle, and Elkins High are positioned to build upon the strong foundation provided at Harman by offering additional resources, such as ADA-compliant facilities, specialized staff, and a wider array of support services and programs. This transition would ensure that students continue to receive individualized care while also gaining access to expanded educational and extracurricular opportunities.

North Elementary has provided strong support to its students within a close-knit school community in Elkins. However, as a smaller elementary school, the range of services and facilities available has been more limited than what larger schools can provide. The receiving school, Jennings Randolph Elementary, is positioned to build upon the foundation established at North by offering expanded resources, including ADA-compliant facilities, specialized staff, and a wider range of student support services and programs. This transition would allow students to continue receiving individualized care while gaining access to broader educational and extracurricular opportunities in a larger school environment.

## 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.*

The closure of Harman School would significantly impact on the school system's future plans by streamlining grade configurations, with students transitioning to Elkins-based schools. Elementary students would likely join Jennings Randolph Elementary, while middle and high school students would move to Elkins Middle School and Elkins High School. This merger supports the district's broader goal of centralizing educational programs, allowing for a more efficient use of resources and the expansion of academic and extracurricular offerings. It would also reduce the need to maintain aging facilities at Harman, enabling the district to focus on upgrading the receiving schools to meet modern educational and facility requirements, ensuring long-term sustainability.

The closure of North Elementary School would have a limited impact on the school system's overall grade configuration plans due to its proximity to Jennings Randolph Elementary, which will receive the students. This merger aligns with the district's broader strategy to centralize programs and resources, ensuring more efficient operations and expanded educational

opportunities within one elementary facility. Because both schools are in Elkins, the transition would minimize disruption for families while reducing the need to maintain two aging facilities. The district will be able to direct resources toward maintaining and upgrading Jennings Randolph Elementary, supporting high-quality educational programs and ensuring long-term sustainability.

## **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.*

No construction work is required with the proposed action.

## **The Future of Closed Facilities**

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

The county board of education will assess the future use or disposal of facilities designated for closure in accordance with West Virginia law. The board will consider various options, including repurposing the building for community use, selling it, leasing it, or transferring ownership to another entity, such as a government agency or nonprofit organization. Before proceeding with any disposal, the board will follow specific legal procedures, which include providing public notice and potentially offering the facility to local government or community organizations. This approach aims to ensure that the future use of the property benefits the local community while complying with state regulations regarding public property disposal.

## **School Building Authority of WV (SBA)**

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

The closure of Harman School is not contingent on funding from the School Building Authority (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

### 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:*

Harman K-12 School^

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$99,872.36
<i>Personnel</i>	\$1,263,501.70
<i>Maintenance”</i>	\$23,843.15
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$100,826.60
<i>Other~</i>	\$122,111.00
<i>Total</i>	\$1,610,154.81

Finance Table 1

^All calculations are based on FY25.

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs.

\*Transportation costs are per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs.

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc.

North PK-5 School^

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$62,435.13
<i>Personnel</i>	\$1,663,530.91
<i>Maintenance”</i>	\$46,528.87
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$196,758.70
<i>Other~</i>	\$236,402.39
<i>Total</i>	\$2,205,656.00

Finance Table 2

^All calculations are based on FY25.

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs.

\*Transportation costs are per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs.

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc.

## Receiving School(s) Annual Current Cost

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

### Jennings Randolph Elementary School^

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$88,313.82
<i>Personnel</i>	\$1,451,638.95
<i>Maintenance”</i>	\$49,306.72
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$208,505.49
<i>Other~</i>	\$253,503.53
<i>Total</i>	\$2,051,268.51

Finance Table 3

^All calculations are based on FY25.

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs.

\*Transportation costs are per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs.

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc.

### Elkins Middle School^

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$166,000.15
<i>Personnel</i>	\$3,947,601.41
<i>Maintenance”</i>	\$143,469.56
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$602,022.88
<i>Other~</i>	\$789,006.86
<i>Total</i>	\$5,648,100.86

Finance Table 4

^All calculations are based on FY25.

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs.

\*Transportation costs are per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs.

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc.

### Elkins High School^

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$250,143.89
<i>Personnel</i>	\$4,147,992.77
<i>Maintenance”</i>	\$221,029.22
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$732,216.45
<i>Other~”</i>	\$916,143.54
<i>Total</i>	\$6,267,525.87

Finance Table 5

^All calculations are based on FY25.

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs.

\*Transportation costs are per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs.

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc.

## Anticipated Annual Cost after Action

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

### Jennings Randolph Elementary School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$90,963.23
<i>Personnel</i>	\$2,649,570.67
<i>Maintenance”</i>	\$50,785.92
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$442,233.95
<i>Other~</i>	\$530,609.59
<i>Total</i>	\$3,764,163.36

#### Finance Table 6

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs plus 3%

\*Transportation costs are a per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs, divided equally between the receiving schools plus 10%

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc., divided equally between the receiving schools.

### Elkins Middle School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$170,980.15
<i>Personnel</i>	\$4,103,499.75
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$147,773.65
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$638,992.64
<i>Other~</i>	\$829,710.53
<i>Total</i>	\$5,890,956.72

#### Finance Table 7

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs plus 3%

\*Transportation costs are a per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs, divided equally between the receiving schools plus 10%

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc., divided equally between the receiving schools.

### Elkins High School

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$257,648.21
<i>Personnel</i>	\$4,147,992.77
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$227,660.10
<i>Transportation*</i>	\$769,186.20
<i>Other~</i>	\$956,847.21
<i>Total</i>	\$6,359,334.48

#### Finance Table 8

“Maintenance costs are FY25 identified and a per pupil allocation of non-salary/utility costs plus 3%

\*Transportation costs are a per pupil allocation of FY25 total transportation costs, divided equally between the receiving schools plus 10%

~Includes salary and supply costs for child nutrition (per pupil), supplies, textbooks (per pupil), travel, etc., divided equally between the receiving schools.

### 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:*

Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle and Elkins High Schools

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Utilities</i>	\$147,173.75
<i>Personnel</i>	\$1,573,202.56
<i>Maintenance</i>	\$57,957.86
<i>Transportation</i>	-\$10,082.66
<i>Other</i>	-\$100,000.00
<i>Total</i>	\$1,678,251.50

Finance Table 9

“Loss of Legislative Funds.

### 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.*

#### Harman School

The closure of Harman School would not result in any anticipated renovations or additions.

#### North School

The closure of North Elementary School would not result in any anticipated renovations or additions.

#### Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle and Elkins High Schools

The closure of Harman Elementary/High School into Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle and Elkins High Schools would not result in any anticipated renovations or additions.

### 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>
2024	\$5,100,262	\$38,523,579	13.2%
2023	\$3,791,076	\$36,068,823	10.5%
2022	\$3,946,903	\$36,000,664	11.0%
2021	\$4,484,084	\$38,125,728	11.8%
2020	\$3,073,766	\$37,863,355	8.1%

Finance Table 10

### 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:

Personnel Table

Harman School – Current School Personnel Data Chart				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	1	10.5	1	.33
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	1.5	3	1.5	1

Personnel Table 2

North Elementary School – Current Before Proposed Action				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	1	14	1	.33
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	2	7	2	1

Personnel Table 3

Jennings Randolph Elementary School – Current Before Proposed Action				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	1	14	1	.34
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	2.5	6	2	1

Personnel Table 4

Elkins Middle School – Current Before Proposed Action				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	3	38	2	1
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	5	5	4	2

Personnel Table 5

Elkins High School – Current Before Proposed Action				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse
<i>number professional personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	3	40.5	2	1
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>number service personnel currently employed at the affected school(s);</i>	5.5	3	5.5	2

Personnel Table 6

Current Affected School Total – Before Proposed Action				
Professional Personnel	Administration	Teachers	Counselor	Nurse
<i>total number of professional personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	9	117	7	3
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>total number of service personnel currently employed at all affected schools;</i>	16.5	24	15	7

Personnel Table 7

Jennings Randolph Elementary School Total – 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>	1.5	23.5	1.5	1
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<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>	4	14	3	1

Personnel Table 8

Elkins Middle School Total – 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>	3	42	3	1
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>total number of service personnel who are anticipated to be employed at the affected school(s) upon the</i>	5.5	4	4	2

<i>completion of the closure or consolidation;</i>				
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Personnel Table 9

Elkins High School Total – 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>	3	40.5	2	1
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<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>	5.5	3	5.5	2

Personnel Table 10

Jennings Randolph Elementary School – Anticipated Net Change 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>	+0.5	+9.5	+0.5	+0.67
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>the anticipated net change in service personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	+1.5	+8	+1	0

Personnel Table 11

Elkins Middle School – Anticipated Net Change 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>	0	+4	+1	0
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>the anticipated net change in service personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	+0.5	-1	0	0

Personnel Table 12

Elkins High School – Anticipated Net Change 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>	0	0	0	0
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary

<i>the anticipated net change in service personnel due to the proposed closure or consolidation</i>	0	0	0	0
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Personnel Table 13

Harman School – 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	6	1	0.33
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>decrease that will occur through reduction in force</i>	1.5	3	1.5	1

Personnel Table 14

North Elementary School – 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	5	0.5	0.33
Service Personnel	Cooks	Aides	Custodians	Secretary
<i>decrease that will occur through attrition</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>decrease that will occur through reduction in force</i>	1	2	1	1

### 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*

Harman 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>
Bus 68A	Harman/Whitmer	47 Min	55Min	+8 Min
Bus 80A	Harman/Middle Mountain/Lambert RD	44 Min	52 Min	+8 Min
Bus 81A	Harman/Dry Fork	30 Min	55 Min	25 Min

Transportation Table 1

North 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>
Bus 61A	Montrose	60 Min	60 Min	0 Min
Bus 64A	Montrose/Kerens/Laurel Mtn.	67 Min	56 Min	-11 Min
Bus 76A	Elkins/Cravens Run/Highland Park	25 Min	50 Min	+25 Min

Transportation Table 2

## 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.

### Harman 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 W. Va. 126CSR92, Policy 4336 Required (Yes / no)*</i>
Bus 68A	Harman/Whitmer Elementary	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Bus 80A	Harman/Middle Mountain/Lambert RD Middle/High	52 Min	7 Min	No
Bus 81A	Harman/Dry Fork Elementary	55 Min	25 Min	Yes
Possible New Route	Harman/Whitmer Middle/High	68 Min	23 Min	No

Transportation Table 2

### North Elementary

<i>Route</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>One-way Travel Time</i>	<i>Amount Exceeding Recommended Travel Times</i>	<i>Is a Waiver of W. Va. 126CSR92, Policy 4336 Required (Yes / no)*</i>
Bus 61A	Montrose	60 Min	30 Min	Yes
Bus 64A	Montrose/Kerens/Laurel Mtn.	56 Min	26 Min	Yes
Bus 76A	Elkins/Cravens Run/Highland Park	50 Min	20 Min	Yes

\*A waiver of WVBE Policy 4336 is only required for elementary school routes that have a one-way transportation time greater than 30 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.*

Students in the Harman community may commute approximately 30 miles to Davis Thomas Elementary and about 35 miles to Tucker County High School, which provides alternative educational opportunities.

### 3.2.f. Student Educational Program

#### County Procedures

All students in Pre-K are assessed using the West Virginia Early Learning Scale, three times a year. All students in grades K-12 utilize I-Ready assessments for Mathematics and English Language Arts. In addition, K-8 students utilize i-Ready intervention tools in both subject areas. I-Ready is a state-approved Universal Screener and Dyslexia Screener adopted to meet Third Grade Success Act Guidelines.

The adopted curriculum for each grade and subject area is listed hereafter. All textbooks are on the approved list from the West Virginia Department of Education per Policy 2510 and meet the Specialized Personal Learning requirement as stated in Policy 2419.

Grade & Subject	Adopted Curriculum
Pre-School	Every Child Ready Apple Tree
English Language Arts K-5	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt into Reading Curriculum (with updated K-2 Structured Literacy Lessons to meet Third Grade Success Act guidelines)
English Language Arts 6-12	McGraw Hill StudySync Curriculum
Mathematics K-8	Carnegie Clear Math Curriculum
Mathematics 9-12	McGraw Hill Reveal Math Curriculum
Science K-5	Discovery Education Curriculum with Mystery Science add-on (standards also integrated into the HMH Into Reading Curriculum)
Science 6-12	McGraw Hill Inspire Science Curriculum
Social Studies K-5	Studies Weekly with correlation to HMH ELA curriculum
Social Studies 6-7 and 9-12	Cengage National Geographic Learning
West Virginia Studies Gr.8	Gallopade
Health & Wellness K-2	Standards are integrated into the HMH Into Reading Lessons
Health & Wellness 3-5	The Great Body Shop
Health & Wellness 6-12	McGraw Hill Teen Health
Music K-5	Quaver Music

### Analysis and Assurance of Consideration

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

The curriculum listed above will remain the same for students at all impacted schools:

- Harman School K-12 (Closing School)
- North Elementary School Pre-K – 5, (Closing School)
- Jennings Randolph Elementary School Pre-K-5, (Receiving School)
- Elkins Middle School 6-8 (Receiving school)
- Elkins High School 9-12 (Receiving school)

At the present time, Harman School currently has an elementary configuration where students across two grade levels receive instruction from the same classroom teacher and within the same environment. The elementary classrooms for Harman are configured as follows:

- Kindergarten/1<sup>st</sup> grade split
- 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade split
- 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade split

Secondary teachers at Harman School also have split classes. The grade levels and subject areas impacted vary from year to year depending on how the master schedule is designed. The Secondary classes that are currently combined include the following:

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Courses Taught Simultaneously</b>
English Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELA Grade 11 &amp; ELA Grade 12</li> </ul>
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Studies &amp; Contemporary Studies</li> </ul>
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math 11 &amp; Math 12</li> </ul>
Health & Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Education Grade 6 &amp; Physical Education Grade 7</li> </ul>
Business Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Computer Applications &amp; Business Communications</li> </ul>
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music &amp; Biology</li> </ul>

Harman’s closest in-county neighboring schools (Jennings Randolph Elementary School Pre-K-5, Elkins Middle School 6-8, and Elkins High School 9-12) could house Harman School K-12 students without having split-grade classroom configurations. Harman School does not currently offer a preschool program, a secondary art program, or an independent K-12 music program outside of what music instruction is provided within the self-contained elementary classrooms. Preschool and independent music programs are both available at Jennings Randolph Elementary School and a visual arts program will be added. Music and art programs are offered at both receiving secondary schools (Elkins Middle School and Elkins High School). In addition, Elkins High School offers advanced courses and programmatic electives within each core subject area. The educational offerings at all receiving schools ensure instruction is provided with grade-level peers in a single classroom setting and include opportunities to pursue advanced courses and a variety of electives within each core subject area.

At the present time, North Elementary School currently has an elementary configuration where some students across two grade levels receive instruction from the same classroom teacher and within the same environment. The elementary classrooms for North are configured as follows:

- Prekindergarten
- Kindergarten
- Kindergarten/1<sup>st</sup> grade split
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade/3<sup>rd</sup> grade split
- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Jennings Randolph Elementary School could house North Elementary Pre-K – 4 School without using split-grade classroom configurations. In addition, students would be able to receive visual arts instruction within the new configuration.

*Affected School Name(s)*

Harman School (Closing School Grades K-12)

North Elementary School (Closing School Grades PK-5)

Jennings Randolph Elementary School (Receiving School Grades Pre-K - 4)

Elkins Middle School (Receiving School Grades 5-8)

Elkins High School (Receiving School Grades 9-12)

*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:*

Please check each item that was 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

11/6/25  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

### **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.*

Harman K-12 School, North Elementary School, Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School

The Harman community is approximately 25 miles from Elkins, where Elkins Middle School and Elkins High School are located, and around 24 miles from Jennings Randolph Elementary. Harman School serves as a K-12 institution, while Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School are designated receiving schools. Similarly, North Elementary, located in Elkins, is also proposed for closure, with its students transitioning directly to Jennings Randolph Elementary due to the close proximity (3.1 miles) of the two schools. North Elementary currently feeds into Elkins Middle School, which in turn feeds into Elkins High School. Additionally, some students in the Harman community may commute approximately 30 miles to Davis Thomas Elementary and about 35 miles to Tucker County High School, which provides alternative educational opportunities.

In response to the evolving educational landscape, families may also consider options such as starting a charter school in West Virginia or enrolling in virtual school programs, which could provide more flexible and personalized educational opportunities.

The Harman community, much like the surrounding rural areas, has limited access to food stores, multiple gas stations, and restaurants, requiring residents to travel to Elkins or other nearby towns for essential services. Harman School remains a central hub for the community, hosting parent nights and other events throughout the year. North Elementary, while located within Elkins, also provides a strong sense of community for its families. Students from both Harman and North already participate in shared extracurricular activities and youth leagues with those from the Elkins area, providing a foundation for stronger ties as schools consolidate.

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

The impact on community relationships would be low for Jennings Randolph Elementary and Elkins schools. Elkins High School would be taking on approximately 33 new students from Harman School, Elkins Middle School would receive around 32 students while Jennings Randolph would receive 35 from Harman. Given the limited number of businesses or athletic facilities in the Harman area to attract residents from Jennings Randolph or Elkins, the most significant impact would stem from the influx of students into these receiving schools. North Elementary would see minimal impact as it is within the greater Elkins area and 160 students would join Jennings Randolph Elementary classrooms.

The effect would be greater for the Harman community as they would be losing their school, resulting in longer bus rides for students and extended commutes for parents dropping off their children at Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle School, or Elkins High School.

Harman School students already participate in youth athletic leagues in the Elkins areas, and the Harman community is currently utilizing the local businesses in these neighboring towns.

Randolph County Schools is prepared to offer virtual learning opportunities with the addition of a facilitator and maintaining an internet accessible location in the Harman community.

*(Numbers based on WVEIS Enrollment 8/25/25)*

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

With the potential closure of Harman School, several new relationships could be developed, including enhanced collaboration between Harman and the receiving schools—Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle, and Elkins High. Joint extracurricular programs, such as sports leagues and academic clubs, could foster connections among students from different communities. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses might arise for sponsorships and community events. Schools could share resources and facilities, while virtual learning opportunities could connect students to innovative educational experiences. Establishing support networks for transitioning families could further strengthen community ties, ensuring a smooth transition for students and families alike.

With the potential closure of North Elementary School, several new relationships could be developed, including stronger collaboration between North families and Jennings Randolph Elementary. Students would have opportunities to participate in joint extracurricular programs, such as sports leagues, music, and academic clubs, fostering new connections with peers from across the community. Partnerships with local businesses and organizations in Elkins could also expand, supporting sponsorships, service projects, and community events. By sharing resources and facilities, the receiving school could broaden educational experiences, while establishing support networks for families during the transition would help strengthen community ties and ensure continuity of care and support for students and their families.

### **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.*

Typed Copy of Legal Advertisement

Identify School(s): Harman K-12 School, North Elementary School, Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle School, Elkins High School

First Run: September 8, 2025

Second Run: September 22, 2025

Third Run: September 29, 2025

Qualified Newspaper Name(s): The Intermountain Newspaper

#### **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 for this Documentation

## **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 for this Documentation

### **3.6. County Board Actions**

#### County Procedures

#### **County Board Vote(s)**

*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 are 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*

*See appendix for this documentation.*

#### **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.*

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

#### **School Building Authority of WV**

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

The consolidation is not contingent upon receiving funding from SBA.

### 3.6. Superintendent Verification of Board Actions

County Procedures

October 8, 2025 @ Elkins High School Auditorium

5:30 p.m.to 6:30 p.m. Harman Hearing

6:30 p.m.to 7:30 p.m. North Elementary Hearing

7:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Jennings Randolph Hearing

8:00 p.m.to 8:30 p.m. Elkins Middle School Hearing

8:30 p.m.to 9:00 p.m. Elkins High School Hearing

9:00 p.m.to vote on closure of Harman School and North Elementary School

Scheduled Date(s) of County Board Vote(s): October 8, 2025, at 9:30 pm

Randolph County requests the West Virginia Board of Education to approve the following.

Closure of Harman K-12 School and Consolidation into Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School.

Closure of North Elementary School and Consolidation into Jennings Randolph Elementary School.

A waiver of WVBE Policy 4336 for creating a bus route that exceeds by more than fifteen minutes the recommended thirty-minute one-way transportation time for elementary students.

- ✓ *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.*

*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

11/6/2025

Date:

## **Appendix of Supporting Data**

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

- 1. SBA Worksheet on Building Program Utilization for all affected schools (Required)*
- 2. Supporting Photographs, Floorplans, and other Documentation (As needed)*
- 3. SBA Facility Condition Documentation for all affected schools (Required)*
- 4. Proof of Public Hearing(s) Notice for all affected schools (Required)*
- 5. Public Hearing(s) Documentation for all affected schools (Required)*
- 6. Board minutes indicating the action of the board to approve the closure(s) (Required)*
- 7. Cover letter addressed to the State Superintendent of Schools (Required)*
- 8. Completed superintendent signature pages (Required)*
- 9. Most current October 1<sup>st</sup> certified enrollment for county (Required)*

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: Randolph School: Harman School Current Enrollment: 104

<i>Classroom Types</i>	<i>Number Of Classroom Types</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>Maximum Pupils/ Class Capacity</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>Total Program Capacity</i>
Kindergarten/1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	1		20		20
2 <sup>nd</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	1		20		20
4 <sup>th</sup> / 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1		25		25
Secondary Classroom	9		25		225
General Instruction	2		25		50
Gymnasium	1		50		50
TOTALS:					390

Program Utilization ( $\frac{104}{\text{Current Enrollment}}$  divided by  $\frac{390}{\text{Total Program Capacity}}$ ) times 100 = 27 % Program Utilization

SCHOOLS PROGRAM UTILIZATION = 27 % 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



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: Randolph School: Elkins Middle School Current Enrollment: 618

<i>Classroom Types</i>	<i>Number Of Classroom Types</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>Maximum Pupils/ Class Capacity</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>Total Program Capacity</i>
General Instruction	31		25		775
SPED Self Contained	2		12		24
Special Education	4		12		48
Band	1		75		75
Gymnasium	1		60		60
Music	1		30		30
TOTALS:					1012

Program Utilization (618 divided by 1012) times 100 = 61 %  
Current Enrollment Total Program Capacity Program Utilization

SCHOOLS PROGRAM UTILIZATION = 61 % 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

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: Randolph School: Jennings Randolph Current Enrollment: 161

<i>Classroom Types</i>	<i>Number Of Classroom Types</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>Maximum Pupils/ Class Capacity</i>	<i>=</i>	<i>Total Program Capacity</i>
Pre-Kindergarten Through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	8		20		160
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Through 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6		25		150
Special Education	2		6		12
TOTALS:					322

Program Utilization (161 divided by 322) times 100 = 50 %  
Current Enrollment Total Program Capacity Program Utilization

SCHOOLS PROGRAM UTILIZATION = 50 % 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

<b>School Closing and Consolidation Timeline</b>			
<b>30 Days Before Public Hearing</b>	<b>3 Weeks Before Public Hearing</b>	<b>Public Hearing For a Closing or Consolidation</b>	<b>Public Hearing Completion and Other Approval Deadlines</b>
<b>Public Postings</b>	<b>Legal Advertisement</b>		
<p>3.1.d. 10 Days before public posting, the WVDE shall receive a draft of the impact statements and supporting data.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3.1.b. Notification Be delivered to the principal and LSIC chair of both closing and receiving schools.</p> <p>3.3.e. Employee Postings Notice for public hearing shall be posted in all schools, bus garages, and maintenance areas.</p>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>3.4.a. Public Hearing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Should be scheduled for a reasonable time, not to begin before 9:00am nor continue beyond 11:00pm.</li> <li>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).</li> <li>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).</li> <li>4. More that one hearing may be held during a given day.</li> </ol> <p>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).</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5.0. Technical Assistance When planning a school closure, counties should seek technical assistance from the WVDE before their public hearing.</p>

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

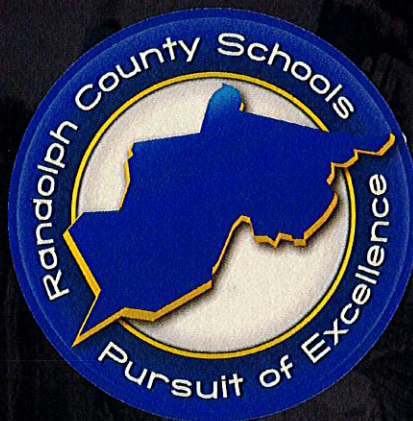
they relate to school closures or consolidations. This document does not replace or supplant legal assistance provided by counsel engaged to represent the county.

## School Closure Timeline Reference Check Sheet

**County**           Randolph          

Date Needed	Date Completed or N/A	Action or Item
	NA	Closure is already contained in the county's CEFP
	NA	Closure is not in the county's CEFP and will be amended before the official closure process
	October 8, 2025	Date amendment approval by the county
December 10, 2025		Date amendment approval by State Board
August 28, 2025	October 8, 2025	Closure is not in the county's CEFP and will be amended along with the official closure process
	October 8, 2025	Date of amendment approval by county (Most likely, this is the same meeting the county board votes on closure.)
	August 28, 2025	Submission of impact book that will be posted for public view to the WVDE for review
	September 8, 2025	30-day posting of impact statement book at required locations and 30-day posting of legal ad in county work areas
	August 29, 2025	3-Week legal ad posting
	September 8, 2025	Ad run 1 Date
	September 22, 2025	Ad run 2 Date
	September 29, 2025	Ad run 3 Date
	October 8, 2025	Public hearing Date Harman School
	October 8, 2025	Public hearing Date North Elementary School
	NA	Public hearing Date (add lines if needed)
	October 8, 2025	County board vote on closures 4-1 Vote to support closure for Harman 5-0 Vote to support closure of North Elementary School
November 10, 2025	November 7, 2025	Submission of impact book with hearing summary, proofs of legal postings, signature pages, and county board approval sent to WVDE and coordinate agenda item with state board
November 10, 2025	November 7, 2025	Submission of documents to State Board for approval by attachment deadline
December 10, 2025		State Board meeting for consideration of closure and CEFP

# Randolph County Schools Strategic Consolidation Plan:



### Proposed Closures

Harman K-12 School and North Elementary School

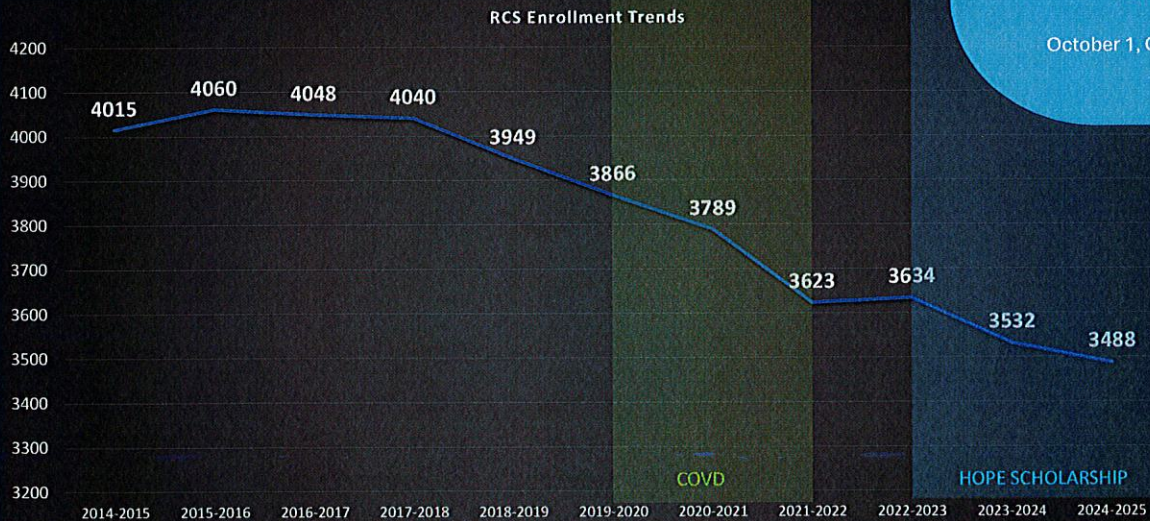
### Strategic Mergers

Students transitioning to Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle, and Elkins High

### Core Mission

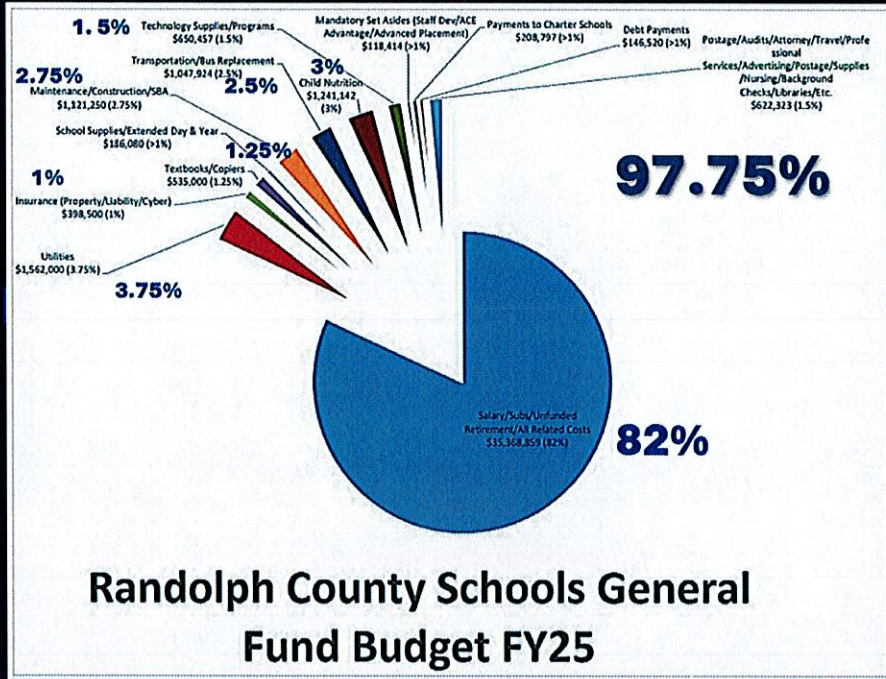
Providing equal and quality education through consolidated services to provide a fiscally sustainable future.

## RCS Enrollment Trends



FILE COPY  
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# RCS Budget Expenditures

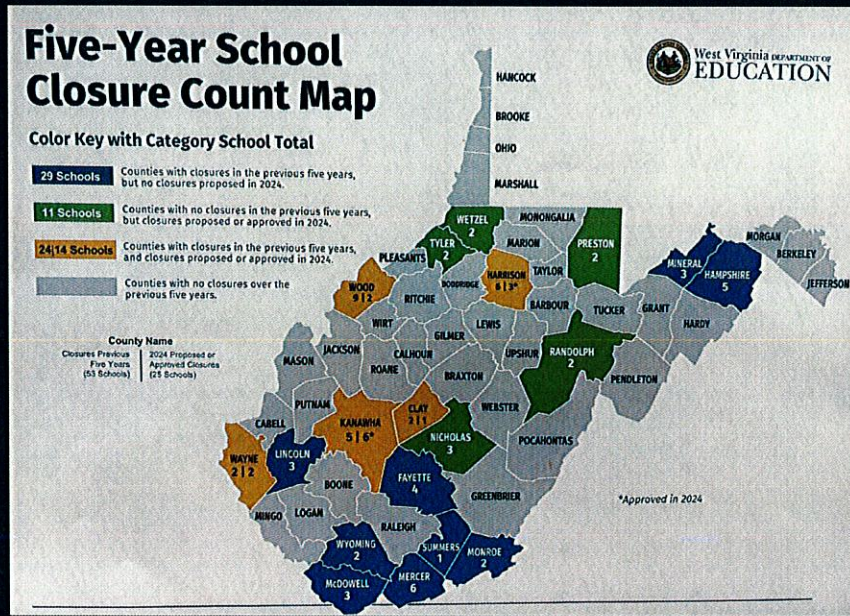


## Randolph County Schools General Fund Budget FY25

Presented August 6, 2024, and December 3, 2024

3

# School Closure Trends



According to the State Department of Education & WV Center on Budget & Policy

**2022**

5 School Closures

**2023**

9 School Closures

**2024**

16 School Closures

**2025**

5 School Closures + 16 Proposed

4



## Enrollment Crisis Drives Change

Significant demographic shifts and declining enrollment necessitate immediate action across Randolph County.

**38%**

**Harman Decline**

From 170 to 105 students (2013-2024)

**25-26** **95**

**29%**

**North Elementary Drop**

From 283 to 201 students over decade

**193**

**15.5%**

**County-Wide Decrease**

System enrollment fell from 4,065 to 3,436 students

**3,364**

Population aging accelerates: children aged 0-4 dropped from 5.1% to 4.7%, while seniors 65+ increased from 17.9% to 22.7%.

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## Financial Impact and Savings

**\$1,678,251.50**

Annual savings through strategic merger

### Personnel Optimization

Addressing inequitable student-to-teacher ratios across the county while maintaining quality instruction.

### Operational Efficiency

Significant reductions in utilities and maintenance costs by ceasing operations at two facilities.

### Resource Reallocation

Better distribution of educational resources and specialized staff across remaining schools.

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# Facility Conditions and Capacity Analysis

Closing schools require millions in upgrades, while receiving schools can accommodate students efficiently.

School	Utilization	Capacity	Upgrade Costs
Harman K-12	25%	395	\$3.8M
North Elementary	53%	350	\$6.2M

## Critical Infrastructure Issues

Harman's 1950 structure has condemned areas, failing roofs, and lacks sprinkler systems. North Elementary needs complete HVAC replacement.

## Receiving School Readiness

No new construction required. Schools will operate at optimal 66-91% capacity, approaching the desirable 85% target.

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# Enhanced Educational Opportunities

Consolidation eliminates educational limitations and expands student access to comprehensive programs.



## Grade-Level Instruction

Eliminates split-grade classrooms, ensuring students learn with same-age peers in dedicated settings.



## Arts and Enrichment

Full-time music and visual arts staff, plus new preschool program previously unavailable at Harman.



## Advanced Coursework

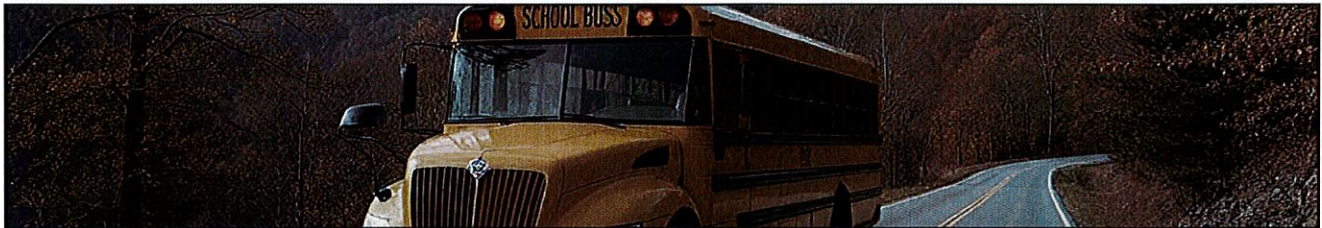
High school students gain access to advanced courses and specialized programs beyond core curriculum.



## Enhanced Support Services

Expanded support staff for students with diverse learning needs.

8



## Community Impact and Transition Plan

Acknowledging community concerns while ensuring smooth transitions and maintaining connections.

### Transportation Solutions

Modified bus routes with waiver requests for extended elementary travel times. Virtual learning opportunities with facilitator support.

### Minimal North Elementary Disruption

Only 3.1 miles to Jennings Randolph Elementary ensures seamless transition for families.

### Strengthened Academic Opportunities

Increasing access to additional academic opportunities in art, music, and accelerated courses.

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## Closure and Merger of Schools

Harman School

North Elementary

Pickens School

Midland Elementary

Coalton Elementary

## Financial Impact and Savings Could Lead to:

- Consider positions like school counselors, PRO officers, school nurses, and social workers at each school.
- Art and music programs at each elementary school.
- Additional administrative and secretarial support at each school.
- Offering additional secondary upper-level courses.
- Provide additional middle and high school CTE programs.
- Maker spaces and other technology in every school.
- Consider supplemental positions, such as Academic Coaches, TIS, TSS, Media Specialist, etc.

10



# RANDOLPH COUNTY SCHOOLS

FILE COPY

School 2025-26

1-Oct-25

NET ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL AND GRADE

SCHOOL NAME	P*	K	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH	7TH	8TH	9TH	10TH	11TH	12TH	TOTAL
ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER								0	0	3	0	2	0	2	7
BEVERLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	32	23	30	23	29	24	18								179
COALTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	13	23	15	19	22	18	34								144
ELKINS HIGH SCHOOL											202	169	164	188	723
ELKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL								188	191	194					573
GEORGE WARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	44	54	46	46	48	48	48								334
HARMAN SCHOOL		8	5	8	8	6	5	11	10	5	9	7	9	4	95
JENNINGS RANDOLPH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	19	22	25	35	33	42	28								204
MIDLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	20	39	18	23	20	27	38								185
NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	23	26	29	26	35	26	28								193
PICKENS SCHOOL		1	1	2	2	3	4	1	5	0	2	1	5	0	27
THIRD WARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	42	50	46	46	48	51	51								334
TYGARTS VALLEY MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL								45	59	59	65	41	46	51	366
<b>GRADE TOTALS</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>3364</b>

Attendance Director Rochelle Ehemoweth Date 10/6/25 Superintendent [Signature] Date 10/6/25

Hope Scholarship  
Homeschool Students

199  
209



# Randolph County Schools

"Purpose, Pride, and Perspective"

40 ELEVENTH STREET, ELKINS, WV 26241  
Telephone (304) 636-9150 Fax (304) 636-9157

November 6, 2025

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

Dear Superintendent Blatt:

This letter is to provide assurance that impact statements were delivered to principals, LSIC, and necessary work locations by central office staff on September 8, 2026, 30 days prior to the hearing. Along with the delivery, all public notices were posted in the front entrances of all impacted schools along with posting on the district' and schools' websites. Deliveries were made directly to principals and photographs of the posted notices were taken by the RCS central office staff. Legal ads ran on September 8, September 22, and September 29, 2025. Randolph County believes they have made a good faith effort to ensure proper notice of all closure proceedings.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shawn Dilly  
Superintendent  
Randolph County Schools

**AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION**

See Proof on Next Page

State of Florida, County of Orange, ss:

Edmar Corachia, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That (s)he is a duly authorized signatory of Column Software, PBC, duly authorized agent of Elkins Inter-Mountain dba The Inter-Mountain, a newspaper published at Elkins, in said county, do hereby certify that the annexed advertisement was published on the following dates:

Sep. 8, 2025

Sep. 22, 2025

Sep. 29, 2025

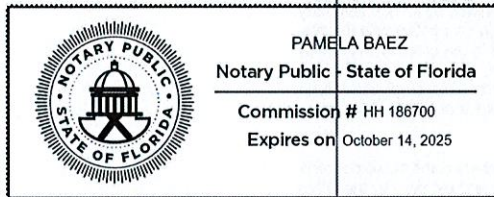
Printer's Fee: \$342.32

*Edmar Corachia*

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

**VERIFICATION**

State of Florida  
County of Orange



Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me on this: 09/29/2025



\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public  
Notarized remotely online using communication technology via Proof.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**PROPOSED CLOSURE AND MERGER OF Harman K-12 School and North Elementary School into Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School**

**RANDOLPH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Randolph County Board of Education will hold five separate public hearings on the Superintendent's recommendation to close Harman K-12 School and North Elementary School at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, and to merge it into Jennings Randolph School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School at that time, as follows:

LOCATION: Harman K-12 School, at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241

First Run: September 8, 2025

Second Run: September 22, 2025

Third Run: September 29, 2025

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

09/08/25, 09/22/25, 09/29/25

DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Sign in to speak between 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: North Elementary School at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241

DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Sign in to speak between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Jennings Randolph Elementary School at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241

DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. Sign in to speak between 6:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Elkins Middle School at Elkins High School 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241

DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 8:00 p.m. Sign in to speak between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Elkins High School at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241

DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 8:30 p.m. Sign in to speak between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m.

If a public hearing is not completed by 11 p.m., it will be recessed, to be continued on a date and at 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 p.m., whichever occurs earlier.

**ALTERNATE DATES AND TIMES**

If it is determined that the meeting location is insufficient size, the hearing location is subject to change. Alternate date(s) may be necessary should a hearing require additional time or be unable to be held on the scheduled date due to inclement weather or other factors beyond the control of the county. If, due to inclement weather or other causes, any hearing cannot be held on the scheduled date, the hearing or meeting will be held at the same location and time as originally scheduled, but on October 15, 2025, beginning at 5:30 p.m. If for any reason a hearing cannot be conducted on an alternate date or time, the Board will determine a date and time.

**HEARING PROCEDURES**

For a period of 30 minutes prior to the commencement of a public hearing, people may and are encouraged to 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 announcement of the procedural process followed by an oral summary from the Superintendent of 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 provided at least 3 minutes, in accordance with West Virginia State Board of Education State Policy 6204. A determination of minutes will be determined at the hearing based on the registered number but will not exceed 5 minutes but no less than 3 minutes.

**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 40 Eleventh Street, Elkins, West Virginia, 26241 before 4:00 p.m. on September 26, 2025 including any findings and recommendations from the local school improvement councils representing Harman K-12 School, North Elementary School, Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School and Elkins High Schools.

**REASONS AND SUPPORTING DATA**

Until the date of the first hearing, written reasons for the Superintendent's recommendations in the form of an Impact Statement and Supporting Data are available for public inspection in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools at 40 Eleventh Street, Elkins, West Virginia, on weekdays between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

**FINAL ACTION**

It is anticipated that the Board of Education will take formal action on the Superintendent's proposal to close Harman K-12 School and North Elementary School at the end of the 2025-2026 school year, and to merge it into Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School and Elkins High School, at its meeting at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, West Virginia, 26241 on October 8, 2025 at the conclusion of the final public hearing.

Shawn L. Dilly, Ph.D.,

Superintendent

Randolph County Board of Education

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LOCATION: Harman K-12 School, at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241

DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Sign in to speak between 5:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: North Elementary School at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241  
DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.  
Sign in to speak between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Jennings Randolph Elementary School at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241  
DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 7:30 p.m.  
Sign in to speak between 6:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Elkins Middle School at Elkins High School 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241  
DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 8:00 p.m.  
Sign in to speak between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Elkins High School at Elkins High School, 100 Kennedy Drive, Elkins, WV 26241  
DATE AND TIME: October 8, 2025, at 8:30 p.m.  
Sign in to speak between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m.

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Shawn L. Dilly, Ph.D.,

Superintendent

Randolph County Board of Education

First Run: September 8, 2025

Second Run: September 22, 2025

Third Run: September 29, 2025

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

09/08/25, 09/22/25, 09/29/25



## OFFICIAL AD PROOF

This is the proof of your ad scheduled to run in **Elkins Inter-Mountain dba The Inter-Mountain** on the dates indicated below. If changes are needed, please contact us prior to deadline at **(304) 636-2121**.

Notice ID: HTzHhAkLp2PGRBMfKYr4 | **Proof Updated: Sep. 03, 2025 at 11:23am EDT**  
Notice Name: Harman/North Closure Notice | Publisher ID: LC4300

See Proof on Next Page

**This is not an invoice. Below is an estimated price, and it is subject to change. You will receive an invoice with the final price upon invoice creation by the publisher.**

FILER	FILING FOR
Jessica Isner jessica.k.isner@k12.wv.us (304) 636-9150	Elkins Inter-Mountain dba The Inter-Mountain

<b>Columns Wide:</b>	1	<b>Ad Class:</b> Legals
<b>Total Column Inches:</b>	10.5	
<b>Number of Lines:</b>	89	

09/08/2025: Other Notice	100.40
09/22/2025: Other Notice	100.40
09/29/2025: Other Notice	100.40
Affidavit Fee	10.00

Subtotal	\$311.20
Tax	\$0.00
Processing Fee	\$31.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$342.32</b>

# ← Harman/North Closure Notice


Edit


Notice ID: HTzHhAkLp2PGRBMfKYr4 📄

Notice Preview →


Activity Log →

 Publisher  
**Elkins Inter-Mountain dba The Inter-Mountain**

 Confirmation Status  
**Confirmed**

 Publication Dates  
✓ Sep 8, 2025   ✓ Sep 22, 2025   ✓ Sep 29, 2025

 Billing Status  
**Invoice Paid**

 Invoice Due  
**Oct 3, 2025**

 Order Number  
**LC4300**

## Quick Actions ⚡

 VIEW PROOF

 VIEW RECEIPT



**Projected Bus Routes if Consolidated**

**Harman School Area**

**Harman School**  
**Bus 68-A**  
**Driver: Jerry Teter**

**2024-2025**

**Morning----- A.M.**

Depart Harman School	5:47
Allegheny Mountain	5:53
Brown brick house job straight	5:57
White and Blue House	5:58
Gray doublewide	6:00
Harper bridge	6:03
White house on left	6:04
Tan house - black roof with garage	6:06
Job intersection	6:06
Bennett's Lane	6:07
Tan Doublewide on hill	6:09
Dry Fork Road	6:11
Slabtown Rd at bridge	6:18
Tan house on left	6:20
Laurel Avenue	6:20
Gandy Avenue	6:21
Tan house above Church of God	6:22
White house across creek	6:23
Norton Hill Road	6:25
Turn around across from CR Candy camp	6:25
Gandy Camp to EHS	7:10

First stop at 5:53AM

Arrive at EHS/Midland at 7:10

Total: 1 hour 23 minutes

Return trip 2:47 - 4:10

Last student dropped off 4:10

**Harman School**  
**Bus: 80-A**  
**Driver: Charlene Roy**

**2024-2025**

<b>MORNING</b>	<b>A.M.</b>
Depart Harman School	5:07
Church/Post Office	5:13
Turn at Trailer Park	5:14
Lilly Valley Dr.	5:26
Parsons Place Road	5:41
Turn onto Lambert Road	
American Drive	5:44
White's Way	5:45
Mullenex Road	5:49
Turn just past the Church	
Turn onto Rt 33	
Turn onto Middle Mtn Road	6:00
Turn at Burnt Ridge Road	6:10
Turn onto 33	
Turn onto Sully Road	6:20
Ketterman Way	6:30
Turn Top of Sully Hill	6:35
Sully Hill to Rt 33	6:50
Rt 33 to EHS or EMS	7:10

First stop at 5:13 AM  
Arrive at EHS/Midland at 7:10AM

Total: 1 hour 57 minutes

Return trip 2:47 - 4:44  
Last student dropped off 4:44PM

**Harman School**

**2024-2025**

**Bus: 81-A**

**Driver: Dana Pennington**

**MORNING-----**

**A.M.**

Depart Harman School	5:50
3228 Red creek Ebaugh Stables	6:07
Bridge Crossing Lane -bonner	6:09
4392 Mailbox - Brown	6:10
Dry Fork Church	6:12
Bonner Mtn. Road	6:13
Dave's Service Center	6:17
Tucker Co Line- Turn around	6:18
4392 Driveway - Cooper	6:19
Easton Cooper Rd	6:22
End of rd - turn -Petty	6:25
5th trailer on left -Mason	6:32
Gemini Lane - McCauley	6:33
Chipmunk Lane - Thoms	6:34

First stop at 6:07AM  
arrive at EHS/Midland at 7:10

Total: 1 hour 3 minutes

Return trip 2:47 - 3:50  
Last student dropped off 3:50

Good evening my name is Lacey Mullenex and I am a parent of a kindergarten student and a third grade student at Harman School.

I would like to bring up some discrepancy I see in the impact statement. First and most importantly the bus routes. I have requested at previous board meeting that those routes be shared with the public. It is very important to me as a parent on how we can effectively bus my elementary students across those mountains. Time is short and I plan on speaking only on the bus my children ride, bus 68a. In the impact statement, on page 27, it states that the bus 68A will have an increase of only 8 minutes. Bus 68A currently goes up the Job Road to Whitmer. The bus will have to come back out the Job Road and turn toward Elkins. I have printed from google maps the time and map of the route. It will be 22.4 miles taking 29 minutes. I do not see how a bus full of children can make it in 8 minutes while a car will take 29 minutes. This will change the bus route from its current 47 minutes to an outlandish 76 minutes, which is equivalent to one hour and 16 minutes, ONE WAY!

We currently have bus routes all over the county that are unfilled and are constantly canceling bus routes due to having no drivers. The impact statement says an additional route will be put in place for the high school students for bus 68a. How will we get an additional driver for the new bus route when we cant even fill the ones we have? This could increase my children's bus time if a driver is not found for the new route.

In addition to the inadequate bus times, I feel it is morally and ethically wrong to have combined Harman and North's impact statements. This was done in an effort to skew numbers, and any good scientist or mathematician would tell you data needs to stand alone. How can we know exactly what is being saved. Does that savings also take into account the loss of 100,000 dollars for Harman and the 250,000 dollars for Pickens from Senate Bill 300 and the addition of new bus routes for the Harman area?

Even if you close all five schools that are proposed you will still not meet budget. However, the county office is still growing. At the last board meeting, you all voted to hire a new director and a new secretary. If we are so finical sought why is the board office growing monthly?

Nothing has changed since the last vote; Harman didn't get any closer to Elkins. The kids will still be put in harm's way. The proposed snow routes that were discussed at a previous meeting have yet to be made public or even been created. In addition, there is only one way to Elkins. So basically, the plan is to leave children at home and make parents scramble to find day care and students learning will literally backseat.

One thing that has changed is we are no longer in a just a million-dollar deficit; we are now in a five-million-dollar deficit. I'm still struggling to understand how that happened, when just six short months ago the promise of closing pickens and harman will fix our budget. The scare tactics, skewed data, and pressure of a state takeover if trying to force you into a vote that was not your original opinion. Please stand strong and vote to close just the town schools, leaving our rural community alone. Robbie Morris is tirelessly trying to increase the funding, and he came through with the promise of additional money last year. He is willing to do it again! Go to the state with the town school closures because the budget won't be balanced even if you close our rural schools. The state just wanted to see progress toward balancing the budget. You will have fulfilled that obligation. I fear if we close our rural School that will be a domino effort in Randolph county schools creating an even bigger budget deficient due to the loss of so many students to homeschooling or neighboring counties.

Thank you for listening to my suggestions and concerns.

Good evening, Board of Education members, Randolph County Schools staff, and concerned citizens. I am here to share concerns about the impact statement concerning the closure of Harman School.

Student transportation 3.2.e shows there will be an increase in current transportation times from 13 to 44 minutes. The table shows an increase of only 8 to 25 minutes. They contradict each other but neither is accurate. The increase in bus ride time will be substantially greater than this. Some of our students will be getting on the bus as early as 5:47am and have a bus route as long as one hour and 23 minutes- one way. All our buses will require a waiver and be over the allotted times for elementary, middle and high school students per WV Code §18-2E-5D. A Harman student could potentially spend 13 hours and 50 minutes on a school bus per week.

Section 3.2.b Facilities - Descriptive Map 1 lists the distance and time from Harman to the proposed receiving schools. These times represent car travel times in normal weather conditions, not bus travel times- nor inclement weather. It is also important to note that most of this route will have no cell service and very limited radio service. The driver will be out of contact with emergency personnel and county office staff for much of this time.

On page 29, Travel Time to Neighboring Public Schools, it is noted that 'Harman students may commute approximately 30 miles to Davis Thomas Elementary and 35 miles to Tucker County High School.' To my knowledge, there is no official agreement that Harman students are guaranteed enrollment in the Tucker County School District.

Again, there are still errors in the data of the impact statement. According to WV State Board of Education Code 18-5-13a, board members are required to use information provided from the impact statement to substantiate their decision upon closure. Inaccurate or skewed data would not be a valid source to justify the consolidation of Harman School.

On page 35, the impact document states, "Randolph County Schools is prepared to offer virtual learning opportunities with the addition of a facilitator and maintaining an internet accessible location in the Harman community." This seems to be an attempt to address the fact that most of the Harman Students have limited access to reliable internet and cellular data. However, there is currently no virtual hub plan in place. Is this a real plan? The board cannot vote on possibilities of a plan, only established plans. What would this look like? Would parents have an opportunity to choose to send their children to the virtual hub in Harman? Is this the creation of a new professional salary position? Will this be housed at Harman School? Again, this is too vague a plan to be included in an impact statement. There is a need for Harman School to remain the active educational facility for our community.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Good evening,

I would like to share an overview of the estimated cost of operating Harman School compared to the projected savings if the school were to close.

The impact statement shows the annual cost of Harman School is approximately \$1.6 million dollars.

- \* Utilities: \$99,872.36
- \* Personnel: \$1.26 million dollars
- \* Maintenance: \$23,843.15
- \* Transportation: \$100,826.60
- \* Other costs: \$122,111.00

When looking at the projected savings of closure, we estimate the actual total to be a negative \$41,733.66, meaning closing the school would cost more, rather than save money.

Here is how that breaks down:

- \* Utilities: There will be no savings because the county will still be paying utilities on the building.
- \* Personnel: A projected savings of about \$99,980, representing the reduction of 2 professional positions and half a service position. It is important to note that Harman School personnel have seniority, which means they would be shifted to other buildings. This results in lower salaried employees being cut instead, so the savings are not as significant as they first appear.
- \* Maintenance: There will be no savings because the county will still have to maintain the building.
- \* Transportation: Added expenses, including \$2,500 in bus depreciation, \$29,131 for a new bus driver's salary, and \$10,082.66 in fuel costs.
- \* Other costs: There will be no savings because these costs will follow the students.
- \* Additionally, the county would lose \$100,000 in Senate Bill 300 funds that are provided specifically for Harman School.

When all of these factors are combined, the district would face a net loss of approximately \$41,733.66 if Harman School were to close.

In other words, closing Harman School would not result in financial savings, it would actually cost the district more.

These numbers clearly show that keeping Harman School open is the fiscally responsible decision for our district and community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



submitted proposal with all its inaccuracies is insulting to the community, parents, students, and staff.

Directly addressing the impact statement and supporting data report, we would like to bring attention to specific errors by section.

### **Enrollment 3.2.a**

The certified October enrollment report indicates all schools in Randolph County have an enrollment and population decrease. If this is a county wide issue, why is Harman School being singled out? With the cut of our Pre-K program, our enrollment data is skewed to reflect a greater loss than actuality. The census data presented in the statement was only within the city limits of Harman. Our school district encompasses a much wider area of our county, including the communities of Job, Whitmer, Dry Fork, Allegheny, Middle Mountain, and Sully.

### **Facilities 3.2.b**

Misinformation is provided about ADA-compliant facilities. Harman School is equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities. All instructional areas are located on a single level or are accessible via handicapped ramp. Harman School also employs two fully certified special education teachers while receiving schools do not have 100% fully certified staff in this area.

The data does not mention complete renovations to Harman School that occurred during the 2014-15 school year that met all Fire Marshall codes. Our school is well maintained and has the availability to expand. Data is presented that Midland Elementary has several systems failing. And though the site is part of the high school and vocational complex, the area for the elementary school is constrained. Why would the county propose consolidating students into a building with failing facility systems when structurally sound buildings are available?

### **Finance 3.2.c**

Within the summary of the finance section, it reads *in an effort to provide an equal and quality education to each student in Randolph County the board proposes to consolidate services*. Is this an

### **Student Transportation 3.2.e**

Anticipated transportation time changes, Transportation table 1, displays incorrect data. The Superintendent is recommending a waiver of WVBE Policy 4336. If approved, this waiver would result in students riding a bus for as much as 1 hour and 57 minutes one way. Harman students would potentially have an 11 hour and 31 minute school day, 5 days per week.

### **Student Educational Programs 3.2.f**

In section summary 3.2.f Student Education Programs, it states *the educational offerings at all receiving schools ensure instruction is provided with grade-level peers in a single classroom setting and include opportunities to pursue advanced courses and a variety of electives within each core subject area.* Harman School's combined class configurations and lack of art, music, and preschool programs is mentioned. This configuration and the loss of music, art, and Pre-K was voted on and approved by previous board action. This was in opposition to Harman School Faculty Senate's requests and the board did not implement itinerant county positions or alternate schedules within the county, to alleviate these concerns.

Our students currently have access to advanced courses in grades 9-12 via West Virginia Virtual School, Eastern Community and Technical College, and on-site dual-credit biology through fully certified Harman School staff. It must be noted that due to the rural nature in which our student population resides, access to online instruction is not an option outside of this school environment.

### **Community 3.2.g**

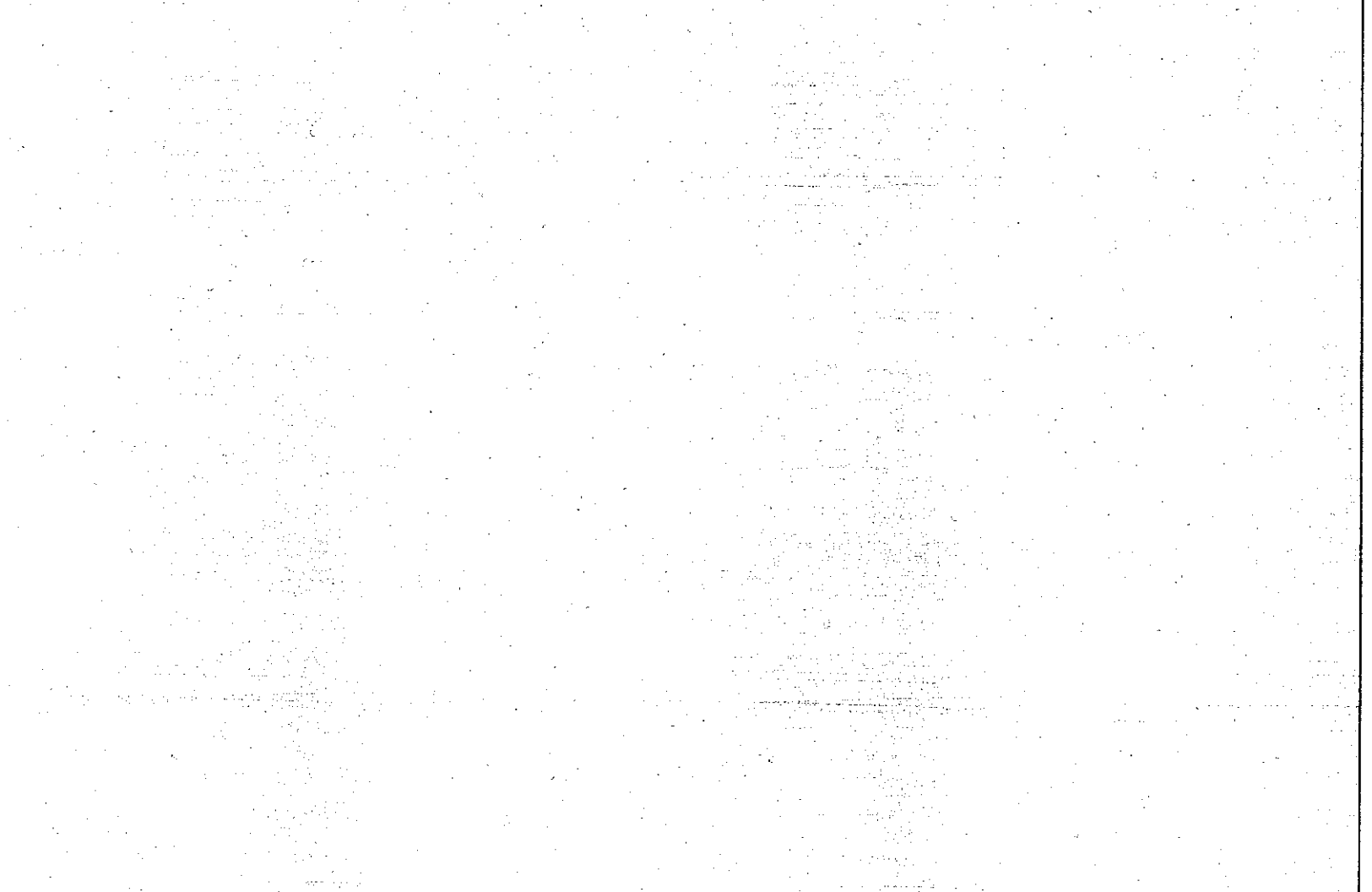
The community section states *with no nearby grocery stores or other essential services and residents frequently travel to Elkins. The community has few remaining public businesses, including a US post office and Harman School. Harman's last grocery store and gas station closed approximately five years ago.* Within city limits, we have several businesses including Dollar General, Midway Service Station -which is a gas station, restaurant and convenience store-, Allegheny Restaurant, Pendleton Community Care Clinic, Grant County Bank, and Pill Box Pharmacy. Camden's Corner Mart (a second gas station, restaurant, and grocery store) is within 4 miles of city limits. Within the Harman School

routes require the request of a waiver of WVBE Policy 4336. Why is information about Lincoln County school consolidation listed in the impact statement for closure of Harman School? A document with this significance should reflect the due diligence that one would expect of our highest public educational leadership.

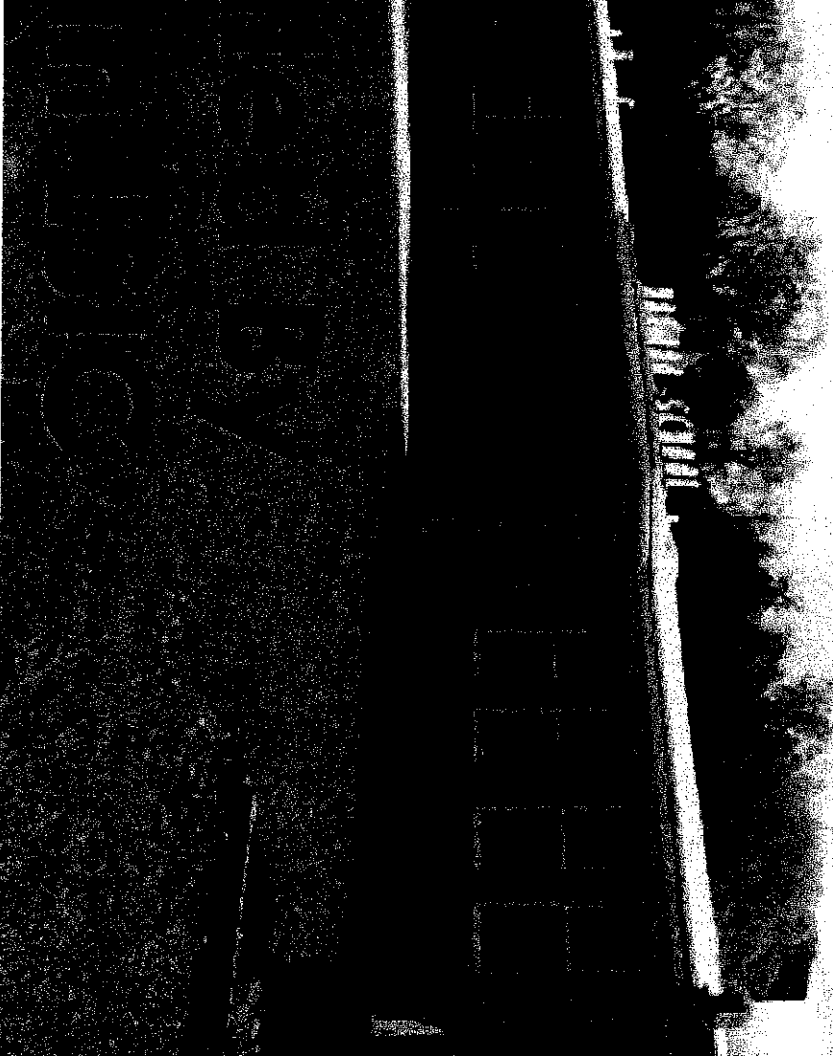
As a faculty senate, we would have appreciated the opportunity to have been notified and included in the discussions that led to this proposed closure and consolidation of our school. *The mission of Randolph County Schools is to prepare today's learners for tomorrow's demands. We believe that by setting high expectations, providing high-quality instruction, and creating safe and engaging learning environments, we can help students to become well-rounded, life-long learners prepared to function in a global society.* We encourage you to vote against the closure and consolidation of Harman School where the Randolph County School's mission has always been a number one priority.

Harman School Faculty Senate

f Harman	<b>Projected Savings of closure</b>	
,872.36	Utilities	\$0
262,501.70	Personnel service)	\$99,980 (2
,843.15	Maintenance	\$0
0,826.60	Transportation	-\$2500 (Bus Dep - \$29,131(new bu salary) -\$ 10,082.66(fue impact statement)
2,111.00	Other	\$0
	SB 300	-\$100,000
\$10,154.81	Total	-\$41,733.66



# e Harman Sc



West Virginia State Code  
Chapter 18 Article 2E Section  
Standards for the duration of  
school bus transportation  
Students to and from

§18-2E-5d. Standards for the duration of transportation times for students to and from school shall be based on the minimum safety standards for transportation adopted by the Department of Transportation to section five of this article shall include the maximum permitted duration of the one-way school transportation time for students to and from school under operating conditions as follows:

For elementary school students, thirty minutes; for secondary school students, thirty minutes; for high school, intermediate school and junior high school students, five minutes; and for middle school students, sixty minutes.

d may not create a new bus route for the transportation of students through the grade levels prekindergarten through grade 5 in a school closure, consolidation or new construction project adopted by 1, 2008, which exceeds by more than fifteen percent the one-way school bus transportation time for the route adopted by the state board in accordance with the provisions of this section.

SS: The board may not create a separate motion to approve creation of a new bus route for the transportation of students through the grade levels prekindergarten through grade 5 in a school closure, consolidation or new construction project adopted by the state board to create the route if the route exceeds by more than fifteen percent the one-way school bus transportation time for the route adopted by the state board to create the route.

SS: The board may not create, nor may the state board permit, a separate motion to approve creation of a new bus route for the transportation of students in any of the grade levels prekindergarten through grade five to and from any school including a school under construction or new construction project approved after January 1, 2008, if the route exceeds by more than thirty minutes the recommended duration of the one-way school bus transportation time for elementary students adopted by the state board in accordance with the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

# EXISTING BUS ROUTES

Existing Bus Routes

One presented is **One Way** Trunkline  
Midland

by transport to EMS add an additional  
cases.

are under Normal Driving Conditions  
routes are longer than the current  
segment by WV Code § 18-2E-5

# DANA PENNINGTON

## BUS ROUTE

dent pick up 6:07 am

dent drop off 3:50 pm

ts will be away from their ho  
nd 43 minutes riding this bus  
weather conditions.

us duration ONE WAY is  
3 minutes

# JERRY TETER

dent pick up 5:53 am

dent drop off 4:10 pm

ts will be away from their ho  
rs and 3 minutes riding this b  
weather conditions.

us duration ONE WAY is  
23 minutes

# CHARLENE ROY

dent pick up 5:13 am

udent drop off 4:44 pm

ts will be away from their h  
rs and 31 minutes riding this  
weather conditions.

us duration ONE WAY is  
57 minutes

## ISSUES

ital to student health and well being  
o have family time and get back to  
extracurricular activities

app in Middle and High School Student  
merican Academy of Sleep Medicine  
ended that children aged 6-12 years  
sleep 9-12 hours ... teenagers aged  
sleep 8-10 hours." It is impossible for th  
e the proper amount of sleep, eat, s  
work if they are only home for 12 ho  
ard Member has been given a copy

# TOPOGRAPHICALLY M

ute from Harman and surrounding c  
s not flat.

g in Elkins at an elevation of 1,971 feet  
low and freezing rain at Harman Sch  
vation of 2,387 feet. Not to mention  
across the four mountains with varyi  
tions of 4092, 3782, 3343, 2700 feet.

JANUARY 9<sup>TH</sup> 2024

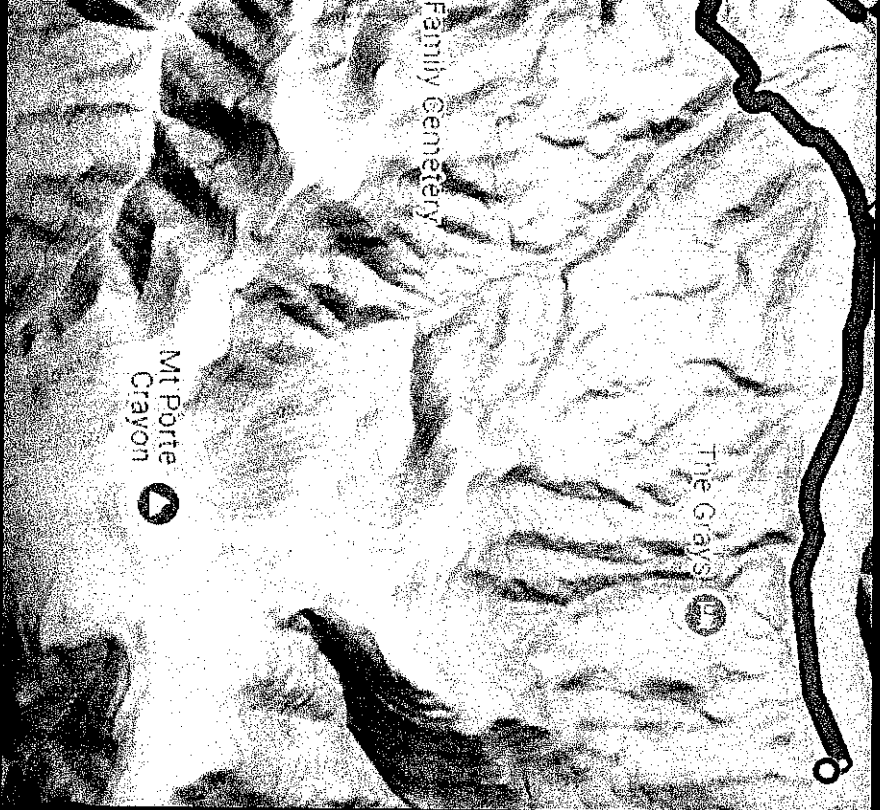
These photos  
were taken the  
same day  
within an hour  
of each other.



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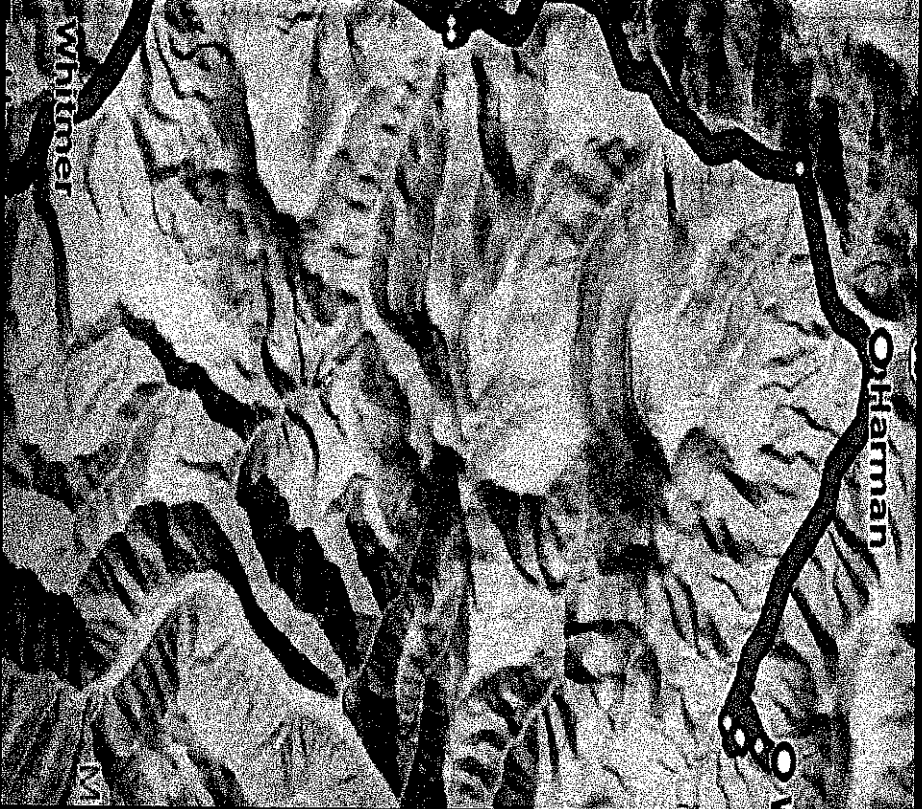
Harmm

# DANNA PENNINGTON



- High  
Elev  
rou
- Total  
in E  
fee

# JERRY TETER



- High Elevation
- Total fee

# CHARLENE ROY



- High  
Elev  
rou
- Total  
in E  
1,75

# SCHOOL TO ELKINS MIDDLE

School 2387 ft

Mountain 4092 ft

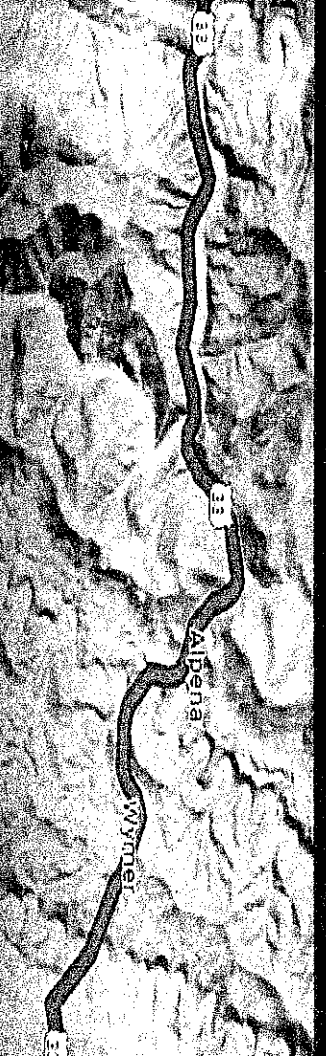
Mountain 3782 ft

Mountain 3343 ft

Mountain 2700 ft

Alle 1971 ft

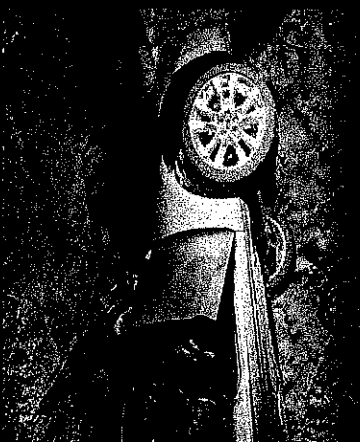
**Total Ch  
Elevatic  
fe**



# INVITATION

To extend an invitation to Dr. Dilly and members to ride the Harman bus routes, driver volunteering his time and a portion of the fuel cost of the route. We look forward to your participation, saving time and money for each of you.

The Randolph County  
School System's vehicle came to rest on  
Whitmer Road in  
Whitmer, NC 28787, 2023  
on the Harman's Route bus 68-A.





# SCHOOLS

Distance from BOE	Available Space
2.8 miles	163
2.3 miles	129
0.9 miles	113
1.7 miles	#
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>

- Why wasn't it recommended to build a school in the suggested area?
- Students would have to travel to a school in the area.
- No long bus routes as other schools are nearby.
- Third ward population is growing.

Information came from Dr. Dilly's previous presentation on the 2000 census population count.

## SS STRUCTURAL SOUND

School got a new roof in 2011. Innovations to bring the building code thanks to the community. Spring was refinished in all elements and some secondary

AC system and cafeteria floor during 2019

Other schools structurally sound? Considered why we are putting into failing buildings and giving them sound ones?

# MONEY THAT MAY BE SAVED

cost will be saved due to hiring less senior teachers. It is the cost.

participation costs be listed as a separate line item. It should be added due to the increased bus rides.

includes non-salary costs for supplies, travel, staff

pay in the other category. Being fed and given materials will need trainings and

**positions at the  
with the cost of  
Harman School  
safe and their  
social-  
are met.**

Harman K-12 School	
Item	Amount
Utilities	\$83,000
Personnel	\$1,000,000
Maintenance	\$7,000
Transportation*	\$98,000
Other**	\$22,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,111,000</b>

Item	Amount
Utilities	\$83,000
Personnel	\$66,000 (per year)
Maintenance	\$7,000
Transportation	Included
Other	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$153,000</b>

## THAT ARE REQUIRED BY WV LA

nd PE positions at the elementary level and or made itinerate so ALL students receive PE in their home county. Keep in mind elementary positions are not certified to teach these courses.

positions in the board office are optional. 32.5 positions active in the board office can be made into itinerate like positions.

virtual courses can be offered instead of physical courses.

and Pickens are all too familiar with these situations in difficult times.






# Mean and Average Points Earned on Summative Grade 8 SCIENCE (Spring 2024 (Summative) 2024

Spring 2024 (Summative) |




Teacher	Student Count	Test Completion Rate	Average Scale Score	Performance Distribution								
	16672		843 ± 1	<p>Percent Count</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>36%</td> <td>6.1K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>38%</td> <td>6.3K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18%</td> <td>3K</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8%</td> <td>1.3K</td> </tr> </table>	36%	6.1K	38%	6.3K	18%	3K	8%	1.3K
36%	6.1K											
38%	6.3K											
18%	3K											
8%	1.3K											
	223		843 ± 1	<p>Percent Count</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>33%</td> <td>74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46%</td> <td>102</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17%</td> <td>37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4%</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </table>	33%	74	46%	102	17%	37	4%	10
33%	74											
46%	102											
17%	37											
4%	10											
	10		844 ± 5	<p>Percent Count</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>40%</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40%</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	40%	4	20%	2	40%	4		
40%	4											
20%	2											
40%	4											

1 and Average Points Earned on Summative Grade 3 MATH (Spring 2024 (Summative)), by Reporting 2024 (Summative) | 4

Other		Student Count	Test Completion Rate	Average Scale Score	Performance Distribution
		15904		425	<p>Percent 22% 25% 26% 27%</p> <p>Count 3.0K 3.9K 4.2K 4.3K</p> 
		249		418 ± 2	<p>Percent 27% 28% 25% 20%</p> <p>Count 67 70 62 50</p> 
		6		433 ± 13	<p>Percent 50% 17% 33%</p> <p>Count 3 1 2</p> 




and Average Points Earned on Summative Grade 6 MATH (Spring 2024 (Summative)), by Ros

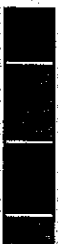


g 2024 (Summative) |

Student Count	Test Completion Rate	Average Scale Score	Performance Distribution
16626		488	<p>Percent 39% 30% 17% 14%</p> <p>Count 6.5K 5K 2.8K 2.3K</p> 
255		472 ± 3	<p>Percent 50% 31% 13% 6%</p> <p>Count 128 79 32 16</p> 
5		502 ± 16	<p>Percent 20% 60% 20%</p> <p>Count 1 3 1</p> 

Grand Average Points Earned on Summative Grade 3 ELA (Spring 2024 (Summative)), by Roster

3/2024 (Summative) |

Student Count	Test Completion Rate	Average Scale Score	Performance Distribution
15904		578	<p>Percent: 26% 27% 26% 20%</p> <p>Count: 42K 44K 41K 32K</p> 
249		565 ± 3	<p>Percent: 57% 27% 22% 13%</p> <p>Count: 93 68 55 33</p> 
6		580 ± 10	<p>Percent: 17% 33% 50%</p> <p>Count: 1 2 3</p> 

Filter	Total				
		Student Count	Test Completion Rate	Average Scale Score	Performance Distribution
		16631		630	 <p>Percent 23% 33% 31% 13%                      Count 3.8K 5.5K 5.2K 2.2K</p>
		255		618 ± 3	 <p>Percent 32% 32% 27% 9%                      Count 82 81 68 24</p>
		5		640 ± 13	 <p>Percent 40% 40% 20%                      Count 2 2 1</p>

TS

place in the state in the No School Spirit  
(Theater Class)

in the county for First and Second grade  
writers division

ng writers' winner three years ago.

University – Dual Enrollment Course

me Scene

mpletion rate for Running with the He  
Virginia winner for the Google Doodle

# IALISM

Harmann and Pickens schools has caused Randolph community.

caused division within Randolph County as far as telling employees they will help convince board members to close and staff from other schools are being board members urging them to close part Tygarts Valley receiving upgrades come at the cost of our school.

## ING AT HARMAN SCHOOL

fair and a hardship on the community not being held at Harman School! It is our way to prevent our students and community from attending the meeting.

ally agreed to hold the meetings at Harman not follow through with this offer is just an is being unjustly treated.

s responded to the LSIC's request for and Dr. Dilly to ride the proposed bus driver willing to donate their time and members willing to pay for the gas.

ward to seeing you at Harman School!

justifiably, concerned individuals on reasons why our school should not be closed. Although the majority of the comments and concerns have been on the transportation hazards and issues I feel that we are forgetting about one of the most important aspects of this whole recommended proposal, and that being the state of health and well-being of our children, and the impact it is going to have on their lives. For many of our students, our school and staff, with over 370 years of experience, is sometimes the only comfort and safety that they can rely upon in providing for and meeting their daily, physical, emotional and psychological needs. Many educational dollars have been spent on providing teachers with the necessary training in recognizing and intervening with personal individual needs. If this closure happens it will create a major impact in these much needed areas of their lives. Several of our students and their parents may not choose the path that has been recommended for them by traveling to other schools and will settle for alternative forms of education such as homeschooling, forcing daily scheduling changes to the established routines for both parents/guardians and their children. Education will be quite different and challenging for both the parents, caregivers and the students. Some of these learning alternatives may not be the most feasible ones but certainly better than the alternative to long, hazardous bus rides. Our Harman parents look to our school and staff for stability and help with their children and place great trust in our abilities to provide services to them. As teachers and staff our daily lives and routines of travel and work will be impacted as well. Rather than recommending closures, let's take a look at how we can save money as a county and create new ways to keep our schools open rather than forcing unnecessary closures and impacting the lives of those involved. How has the county been able to manage keeping our school open and avoid closure prior to this recommendation? For the past several years, we have heard talk about plans to eliminate Harman School, and continually combining classes, eliminating the music, band, art, preschool, has certainly not helped us in that matter. Before making your decision, I encourage you to read the impact statement in detail and look at the many non-factual parts that are included. Part of the impact statement for closure had stated that schools other than Harman provide enhanced student services, such as special education, counseling and health services supported by specialized staff, greater resources, wider variety of academic programs, including advanced courses and that the receiving schools are well-equipped to accommodate the transitioning students, ensuring that our students have access to diverse educational opportunities.

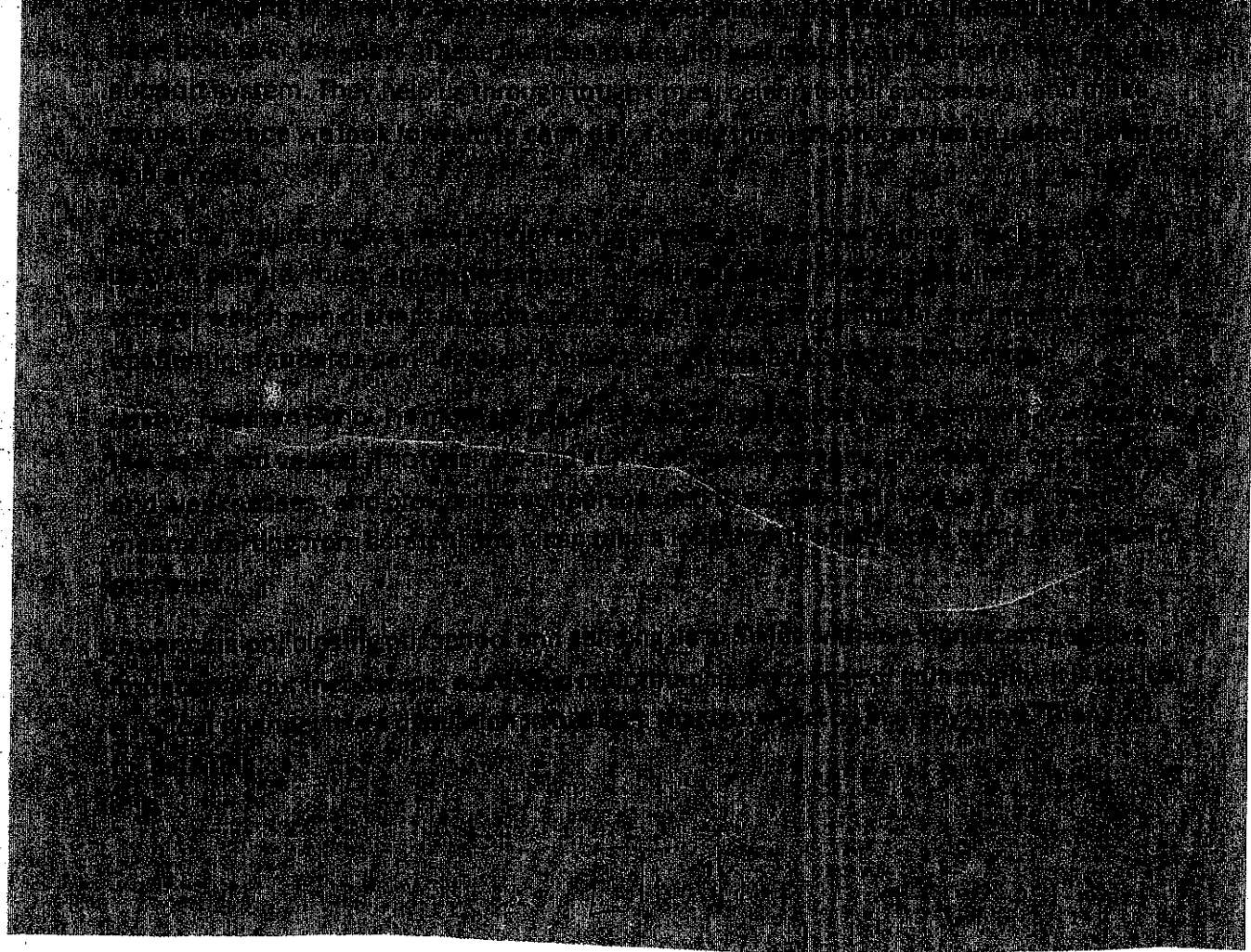
opportunity and interest he has developed may all be taken away from him. Any suggestions on how I should break the devastating news to him that he may not be playing ball anywhere next year? His parents are working individuals and they and many other parents will not have the time to devote to transporting them to and from practices and extra-curricular events if they are in Elkins. What other options or alternatives have even been looked at or presented to those on the committee who decided that this was the quickest and most feasible of plans to close two of the most distant outlying schools in the county while not pursuing other options that may have a lesser impact on the education and safety of our children. We have specialized community services of emergency squad, fire departments, a post office, several public and private business, a library, VFW, medical clinic and a pharmacy as well. Has anyone completed an impact study to see how this building closure would impact our businesses and services that help sustain and provide support services to our children.

These schools also provide enhanced student services, such as special education, counseling, and health services, supported by specialized staff. Myself and the other special education teacher are fully certified to teach Special Ed. Where there are currently special education services being provided to students by non-certified teachers in other schools throughout the county. Harman School, a small K-12 institution, has limited resources and accessibility features to fully accommodate students with disabilities. In contrast, the designated receiving schools are better equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These schools provide ADA compliant facilities, specialized staff, and comprehensive support services, including individualized (IEPs), counseling, and physical accessibility features like ramps and elevators. If Harman School were not meeting these mentioned needs of students with disabilities and out of compliance for ADA, I feel strongly that our administration would have notified us of that well before now. All of our students with disabilities are fully accommodated by myself and the other fully certified sped teacher. Both of us who have master's degrees. Our building actually saw improvements and additions to meet ADA compliances due to pervious special needs students. And we do not need an elevator simply because we are only a one story building.

public schooling due to the lack of transparency of the previous administration and how their hard earned tax paying money has been spent on needless programs?

The leadership team that considered how to minimize the negative impact on the students, how can the closure of our school and busing our students to Elkins have the most negative impact on students? This certainly does not apply to the safety of the students while in transportation. This building of a more sustainable and stronger educational school system for Randolph County Schools unfortunately will not include the majority of our students at Harman School neither will they have the opportunities for basic education or essentially for some it will mean the end of their education altogether.

I want to conclude by urging the board members to vote NO simply due to the impact that this will have on the lives of our children. So what is the price you are willing to place on the health, well-being, safety and education of our children? I'm asking you tonight, please do not vote for this recommendation.



impartial have already decided what they want to do without a second thought thanks to Dr. Dilly's tactics.

The eyes of West Virginia are watching Randolph County closely. As a board member, you must make an unbiased decision and listen to the facts and vote based off the facts presented. You, the board members, not only serve your district but also serve the County as a whole. What Dr. Dilly proposes is ridiculous. Some of the board members are or are retired medical doctors. If a patient came in with first- or second-degree burns on their hand and arm, how would you treat that patient? Would you cut off the arm to save the patient or would you treat the burn until it healed? Shutting the schools down would be to cut off the arm of a first- or second-degree burned patient. Yes, it would save the patient's life, but at what cost? Treatment to the patient would be not voting for the closure of schools, yes, positions would be cut and people in Elkins and Tygarts Valley would feel inconvenienced, but over time things would get better.

Another thing that needs to be considered is that Harman is close to Cannan Valley. Cannan Valley has been the go-to place for people who live in D.C. to come and have a second home. People see that Harman school is open, and they would want to bring their families their opening to more people coming from D.C. and other areas thus giving the county more money. That can't happen if Harman school is closed, then it would be up to the people of Elkins and Tygarts Valley to have their property taxes raised to help keep what schools are open 5, 10, 20 years down the road.

In conclusion, You, the board members, need to do what is right and vote against the closure of Harman and Pickens schools. It would be the right thing to do, even though it will cause an inconvenience to other schools in Randolph County you the board members would be doing the morally right thing.

My main concerns are the travel dangers on the mountains between Harman and Elkins, and the number of times poor road conditions would cause delays or prevent the Harman students from attending school. In a mild winter, this could easily cause Harman students to fall five or six days behind the other students in their new classrooms. What would happen in a bad winter? There have been several days each winter when Elkins has rain, but the mountains are covered with ice and snow.

This is not just in winter months. We have had snow in every month from October through May. That's nine months out of the year. In May 2023, our bus driver had 10 inches of snow at her house. My bus driver also has had repeated difficulties reaching Elkins by radio. Just this week, she said there was a downed tree on her route and she was not able to reach Elkins. They could not copy her.

My other concerns are negative impacts on students in larger class sizes; how drastically different a school day would be for Harman kids going to a much larger school; and how long, and exhausting, their school days would become.

Harman School as a building is in good shape and has had many updates in recent years. When lack of funding caused the Randolph County Board of Education to close Valley Head and Homestead elementary schools in 2016 and 2017, the primary financial strains were based on the need for costly repairs and building upgrades. The Harman and Pickens school buildings are in much better shape. If busing students over the mountains is not a concern, why not redraw school district lines and send children from Bowden and the eastern side of Elkins over to Harman? Or, redraw the lines within Elkins and keep three elementary schools instead of four, so you could leave Pickens and Harman open?

How much money will actually be saved by these proposed closures, especially when a

Every parent worries about putting their child on a bus on the winter roads. I remember the bus driver being nervous in the morning considering he knew how bad the mountains were and that they could go from bad to worse in 20 minutes. He knew he was responsible for all the kid's health/life when he had to cross the traitorous mountains in the winter.

Sometimes it would take 50 minutes to an hour to get to school and I was the last one to get on the bus before heading to Elkins. There were so many kids that had been on the bus much longer.

The BOE would make the call to have school when it would be 40 degrees and raining in Elkins while it was 30 degrees and snowing in our area. It is a different world in Harman, often we have several inches of snow when no one else does. This needs to be considered when busing our kids across the mountains.

Yes, there is a bus that travels to Elkins every day to take students to the Vo-tech. Please remember that this bus leaves late in the morning after the snow has begun to melt and the roads have time to clear. There were times that this bus did not run because the roads were not safe, and students stayed at Harman for the day missing our classes. Next year the students will not have that luxury, they will have to be put on a bus in the early morning hours at dark while the roads are still frozen and slick.

I caution the BOE to look out for safety and health and future of the students that go to Harman School. Busing them across the mountains in the winter does not do that. I only did it for one winter and it is still a horrible memory. I hope all the little kids do not have to go through what we did.

Please take this into consideration when making the decision to close Harman.

Sincerely,

basketball. We competed nationally in FBLA competitions and if competitive basketball statistics. If we had attended school in Elkins, we would have missed out on a lot of extracurricular activities just due to the sheer factor of travel time and weather limiting factors.

Fast forward 12 years my parents are proud to say all four girls graduated from Harman School and were enrolled in college at West Virginia University. 10 years later, all four girls had a college degree or two. My oldest sister has a Doctor of Pharmacy, my younger two sisters have bachelor's degrees in civil engineering. I have an animal veterinarian science degree and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

I graduated with a class of 17 students, 41% of those students had attained bachelor's degree or higher in 2002. My family's success as well as many other students that attended Harman School were based on the fact that we had good teachers and a good school and good community. There are many of these communities across West Virginia and we need to support these communities so they can keep their schools open and keep their educational standards high.

My purpose of being here this evening is to brag on my community and brag on my school. I am where I am because of my humble beginnings in little ol' Harman. My experiences growing up and my education has shaped me into the person I am today. I knew when I graduated veterinary school I wanted to go back home and help care for the animals in my community. I wanted to help make my community more self-sufficient. I have owned and operated my own veterinarian business for the past 10 years which is based out of my hometown. I have a first-generation farm in Whitmer West Virginia, where my husband and my four children help raise 100 breed cows. My love and dedication to my community was instilled to me at a young age and I'm honored to live and practice there.

Our school is a vital part of our community. The future of our school is in your hands.

these accounts to hear and will give due consideration to the many compelling speeches and reports submitted. While I won't dwell extensively on this aspect, it is vital to acknowledge the potential risks involved, including accidents or worse, tragedies, during treacherous weather. As decision-makers, I urge you to consider whether you would want to bear accountability for such outcomes.

Harman School represents more than an educational institution – it is the heart of our community. The interconnected towns of Harman, Job, Whitmer, Dryfork, and Wymer foster bonds that go beyond mere acquaintance; they are like family. Despite misconceptions or stereotypes, this community takes immense pride in its identity and mutual support. The superintendent's initial impact statement was deeply disheartening, portraying us in a light far removed from reality.

Although I did not attend Harman School myself, my husband and three children have had the privilege of being part of its legacy. My youngest, a junior with learning disabilities and a speech impairment, has flourished in the nurturing environment offered by Harman. The smaller class sizes, attentive faculty, and close-knit community have enabled her to build confidence and overcome obstacles that larger schools might not accommodate. The bonds she has formed with her teachers and peers have been critical to her success and emotional well-being. Disrupting this environment by transferring her to a larger school would erode her progress and exacerbate her anxiety.

The prospect of Harman School's closure raises broader concerns for other students as well. Many are integral to their families' livelihoods, balancing school

... of the Board's financial allocations. This may reveal inefficiencies or unnecessary expenditures that could address budgetary concerns more effectively.

Closing Harman School would not only disrupt students' routines but also negatively impact their health and academic performance. The stress of extended commutes, combined with less individual attention from teachers and reduced time for rest and social interactions, could harm their mental and physical well-being. With several Board members holding medical credentials, I trust these health implications weigh heavily in your deliberations.

In conclusion, I urge you to prioritize the education, safety, and overall well-being of our students in your decision-making. As elected representatives, your responsibility is to act in the best interests of the community and its children. Please ensure that your decision reflects both compassion and reason, free from external pressures.

I respectfully ask that you vote to save Harman School.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Leslie Roy

being a bus driver. I can recall many situations that could have had very unfortunate outcomes for the students, and families, and the Board of Education. Please remember that during the training that bus drivers receive, they teach and tell them that all accidents are preventable. In class this statement only pertains to the bus operator. In real situations the bus drivers can't control what other drivers do.

After diving a bus with students on it across the mountains from Harman to Elkins and back, I'm a firm believer that it's not IF an accident will happen but WHEN.

Even as an experienced driver I had to deal with some of the following situations due to circumstances out of my control such as requesting a delayed dismissal bell due to poor road conditions, wrecks, or road construction and maintenance.

I encountered several wrecks. Once a car was in the middle of the Glady River with the front end submerged through the ice. I witnessed a car upside down at the rocks above the Alpine Lodge and a car that hit a huge bolder at Evenwood. All of these unfortunate incidents were the result of treacherous road conditions.

One afternoon I was returning from Elkins to Harman when a WV Truck was completely across the center lane about to hit our bus head on. I pulled the bus close to the guard rails bracing myself and the students for the impact. At the last minute he swerved barely missing the bus. I couldn't help but feel very blessed at that moment in time.

I've encountered road rage on several occasions. The one that stands out in my mind was when a driver tried to brake in front of my bus and held out their hand making rude and disgusting gestures with their hand.

On Shavers Mountain I was following a panel truck, we were going down the mountain when the panel truck started sliding in circles then crashing in the road bank on the oncoming lane of traffic. Almost the same thing happened on Rich Mountain. A car in front of the bus started sliding in circles and crashed in the roadway bank in the opposite lane. A little further down the mountain I encountered a tractor

had a much different outcome. Please take my first-hand experience and look for other options other than sending our students and their families across four mountains.

Sincerely,




Mike Bennett

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
COUNTY OF Randolph

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this November 19, 2024  
by Mike Bennett.

My commission expires October 22, 2024

  
Notary Public Stephanie Roy



- There is a lot of things to take into account when you close this school.
- This would mean busing approx. 103 students across 4 mountains which in the winter, these roads can become a great hazard.
- I travel these roads almost every workday of the week and have seen mutable wrecks and injuries due to the road conditions.
- As a fireman it concerns me that the children will be leaving home much earlier than they normally do.
- This creates a great hazard, some morning it is hard or even impossible to keep the main roads open alone the back roads that many of the children have to endure.
- This also creates a hazard for the Whitmer and Harman Vol. Fire Departments, keep in mind that these two companies run on just volunteers.
- So, the majority of the fireman will be on their way to work of the morning and on their way home of the evenings.
- So, if there were a bad wreck on the mountains you would be jeopardizing ever child's life.
- Another thing to take into account would be the number of ambulances that would be required if there would be a bad wreck and how hard it would be to get to them across these treacherous roads in the winter.
- We also have two ski areas not far from Harman and there are all kind of drivers that come into ski from other states and when they cross the mountains for the most part, they don't have good winter tires on their vehicles.
- I have encounter this myself, a few years ago I was almost hit head on because of this type of driver due to slick roads on the mountain. I was still struck by the vehicle but luckily there were no injuries.
- There also mutable tractor and trailers that cross these mountains and have trouble and get stuck on the roads and sometimes jack knife and cause the roads to be

spend it at Harman. Thank You.

Sammy Roy  
Whitmer VFB

**Tough Turf Decision as \$1.6 mil to be spent on EHS sports facilities**

**Funds earmarked for new gym at Tygarts Valley**

**Superintendent Dilly applies for a grant that would build a new gymnasium and construct new classrooms at Tygarts Valley Middle School/High School.**

That is exciting news and you feel pretty good if you have students in the schools and communities receiving that level of attention and resources. However, put those headlines in the context of the following:

**Superintendent Dilly recommends closing Harman and Pickens schools**

**BOE to vote on shuttering Harman, Pickens schools**

**Honking for Harman, Teachers, parents protest closure plan**

**Harman raises thousands of dollars to fix its school.**

Think of how productive and unifying it would be to see the following headlines?

**BOE fights to keep Harman and Pickens Schools open.**

**Superintendent Dilly sides with parents in recognizing the harm to students and communities in closing schools**

**The School Board and parents join forces to create innovative solutions to the ills of consolidation.**

**Board of Education lobbies the legislature to fix the school aid formula.**

**Health care professionals weigh in on the detrimental effects of long bus rides, especially on young children.**

Do Superintendent Dilly and the members of the Board of Education have the right to make these decisions?

Phil Chua and Rachel Anger, consistent with their training, vote to approve 1 ½ hour one-way travel times? Waivers, championed by Superintendent Dilly, of the State "Bus Routing" recommendations, do little to console the child who needs to go to the bathroom an hour into their 80 minute bus ride to Elkins.

The recent Randolph County Chamber of Commerce "Conversation on Education" was led by the two leading education proponents in the county who enthusiastically described all the partnerships and innovations that are occurring. That is good news, however, interestingly, they specifically avoided any discussion about school closures, consolidation, and its negative impact on the communities.

If you are a person unaffected by the potential action by the BOE, we invite you to join the other members of the community that are so critically impacted. We ask for your support and frankly, your outrage that the Superintendent of Schools and the Randolph County BOE would even seriously consider consolidating Harman and Pickens. To several of the schools in the Elkins community, our fight will be your fight in just a few years.

Finally, don't underestimate the love we have for our children and grandchildren or the tenacity and resolve with which we will fight for their wellbeing.

Dan Bucher

Harman School Class of '72

2. Has the board considered the potential financial loss when over 85% of students, or possibly more, opt for homeschooling?

3. What is the proposed new name for the consolidated school?

4. Why is the hearing not being held at Harman School? Does the board recognize that scheduling the hearing and vote on the same day in Elkins, instead of Harman, could appear to be an attempt to avoid direct community engagement? Also, shouldn't Elkins Middle & High and Midland have hearings scheduled after the vote is concluded? That way your decision isn't obvious. I'm not alone in thinking this the cowards way out of facing the community and students.

5. How does the board plan to address transportation concerns, such as ensuring that timely bus routes for children to return home if the school is closed? What if the mountains are closed, will arrangements be made to assist families in accessing necessary services, such as medication from the pharmacies? Will rooms and chaperones be provided?

6. What alternatives will be available for students who rely on extracurricular activities that do not require staying after school, such as sports programs, which may no longer be accessible?

7. As educators and professionals, has the board fully considered the well-being of the students beyond financial implications?

coercion to influence the decisions or outcomes of this board?

5. Is the board aware of any intimidation tactics employed by the superintendent against teachers or service employees, including threats or retaliation for speaking out against the closure of the school or for opposing any hostile employment practices?

6. Have any board members participated in informal voting or reached a prior determination regarding the closure of the school during the closed-door sessions? If so, was the superintendent present during any of these sessions?

justifiably, concerned individuals on reasons why our school should not be closed. Although the majority of the comments and concerns have been on the transportation hazards and issues I feel that we are forgetting about one of the most important aspects of this whole recommended proposal, and that being the state of health and well-being of our children, and the impact it is going to have on their lives. For many of our students, our school and staff, with over 370 years of experience, is sometimes the only comfort and safety that they can rely upon in providing for and meeting their daily, physical, emotional and psychological needs. Many educational dollars have been spent on providing teachers with the necessary training in recognizing and intervening with personal individual needs. If this closure happens it will create a major impact in these much needed areas of their lives. Several of our students and their parents may not choose the path that has been recommended for them by traveling to other schools and will settle for alternative forms of education such as homeschooling, forcing daily scheduling changes to the established routines for both parents/guardians and their children. Education will be quite different and challenging for both the parents, caregivers and the students. Some of these learning alternatives may not be the most feasible ones but certainly better than the alternative to long, hazardous bus rides. Our Harman parents look to our school and staff for stability and help with their children and place great trust in our abilities to provide services to them. As teachers and staff our daily lives and routines of travel and work will be impacted as well. Rather than recommending closures, let's take a look at how we can save money as a county and create new ways to keep our schools open rather than forcing unnecessary closures and impacting the lives of those involved. How has the county been able to manage keeping our school open and avoid closure prior to this recommendation? For the past several years, we have heard talk about plans to eliminate Harman School, and continually combining classes, eliminating the music, band, art, preschool, has certainly not helped us in that matter. Before making your decision, I encourage you to read the impact statement in detail and look at the many non-factual parts that are included. Part of the impact statement for closure had stated that schools other than Harman provide enhanced student services, such as special education, counseling and health services supported by specialized staff, greater resources, wider variety of academic programs, including advanced courses and that the receiving schools are well-equipped to accommodate the transitioning

opportunity and interest he has developed may all be taken away from him. Any suggestions on how I should break the devastating news to him that he may not be playing ball anywhere next year? His parents are working individuals and they and many other parents will not have the time to devote to transporting them to and from practices and extra-curricular events if they are in Elkins. What other options or alternatives have even been looked at or presented to those on the committee who decided that this was the quickest and most feasible of plans to close two of the most distant outlying schools in the county while not pursuing other options that may have a lesser impact on the education and safety of our children. We have specialized community services of emergency squad, fire departments, a post office, several public and private business, a library, VFW, medical clinic and a pharmacy as well. Has anyone completed an impact study to see how this building closure would impact our businesses and services that help sustain and provide support services to our children.

These schools also provide enhanced student services, such as special education, counseling, and health services, supported by specialized staff. Myself and the other special education teacher are fully certified to teach Special Ed. Where there are currently special education services being provided to students by non-certified teachers in other schools throughout the county. Harman School, a small K-12 institution, has limited resources and accessibility features to fully accommodate students with disabilities. In contrast, the designated receiving schools are better equipped to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These schools provide ADA compliant facilities, specialized staff, and comprehensive support services, including individualized (IEPs), counseling, and physical accessibility features like ramps and elevators. If Harman School were not meeting these mentioned needs of students with disabilities and out of compliance for ADA, I feel strongly that our administration would have notified us of that well before now. All of our students with disabilities are fully accommodated by myself and the other fully certified sped teacher. Both of us who have master's degrees. Our building actually saw improvements and additions to meet ADA compliances due to pervious special needs students. And we do not need an elevator simply because we are only a one story building.

public schooling due to the lack of transparency of the previous administration and how their hard earned tax paying money has been spent on needless programs?

The leadership team that considered how to minimize the negative impact on the students, how can the closure of our school and busing our students to Elkins have the most negative impact on students? This certainly does not apply to the safety of the students while in transportation. This building of a more sustainable and stronger educational school system for Randolph County Schools unfortunately will not include the majority of our students at Harman School neither will they have the opportunities for basic education or essentially for some it will mean the end of their education altogether.

I want to conclude by urging the board members to vote NO simply due to the impact that this will have on the lives of our children. So what is the price you are willing to place on the health, well-being, safety and education of our children? I'm asking you tonight, please do not vote for this recommendation.

In February of 2013, Senate Bill 359 was introduced. The Governor was later asked, "what happened to the education audit recommendations to cut the top-heavy administrative bureaucracy and drive education dollars and decision making directly to classrooms and teachers, which research proves as the biggest determining factor in raising student achievement?" There were many items addressed in this new Senate Bill but top-heavy administrative bureaucracy was not addressed.

Tim Armstead, WV House of Delegates, led off the effort to change the bill with an amendment to reduce the number of administrators in the public education system. He said his move was in response to the education efficiency audit that found West Virginia's public education system is top-heavy. "Only Alaska has more administrators or basically more bureaucrats that control the education system," Armstead said. He said West Virginia has one administrator for every 419.3 students, which is out of line with neighboring states. For example, he said Maryland has one for every 1,543.8 students, Kentucky has one for every 2,114.3 students, Ohio has one for every 3,130 students, and Pennsylvania has one for 3,620 students. The amendment proposed by Armstead and other Republicans would require the system to pare down to one administrator for every 2,000 students and divert resources into the classrooms.

That would be 1.5 administrators for the entire county of Randolph. Your website says there are 9 administrators in the Randolph County BOE Central

calculate these numbers. In other words, your BOE central office employees, 32.5 of them, their salaries are approved by the five Randolph County BOE members.

The 32.5 BOE Central Office employees earn \$2.16m for the school year 2024/2025, which represents 8% of the total county salaries. 32.5 of the employees represent 6% of total FTE's. The MEDIAN income per household in Randolph County is \$47,323, this is for an entire household. The MEDIAN income for the entire BOE Central Office is \$62,757, an individual person not the entire household. This means that an individual employee of the BOE Central Office is paid 31% more than an entire household in the county. These salaries were approved by the five BOE members, not the state of WV, locally in Randolph County.

If we are paying the BOE central office, with taxpayers money, much higher than the median household income in the county, something is off. If you would hypothetically pay the BOE central office administration team the household median income, you would save \$578,846. We understand this can cause legal issues when reducing salaries because they can file a grievance with the state of West Virginia. So...if you were to freeze salaries for the next school year for the BOE office, all county administrators and other BOE determined positions, based on your historical raise calculations, you would save over \$250k for the next school year.

In addition, since 2020, there has been a 10% reduction in students attending public schools in Randolph County. During these past five years, the

Harman, the treasurer said 17 employees would be laid off to save the \$1.2m needed. So please don't let the superintendent scare you with laying 32 employees off because either way, you will be laying off FTE.

If you would pay a third-party audit company, not a state of West Virginia auditor, but a true third party auditor to show you how to be wise with tax payer dollars, I am sure they can help save millions of dollars so you don't need to close any schools in Randolph County. If you the BOE would do their job, you will see that you don't need to close the Harman School.

Thank You,

J.R. Murray

12/17/24

we come to Middle Mountain next and hold on, up and down and we made it to the bottom of Middle Mountain, where there could be 12 inches of snow and you think we have it made and then we come to Rich Mountain, hold onto your panty hose down the east side which is like a ski slope. If you make it to Harman, the good Lord was with you, prayers have been answered. Then O boy, you have to go to Whitmer or down to Lanesville whoopie. When you go to Whitmer, look at it, no school, no post office, no stores and very few people, it is a ghost town. I know I used to live there and I used to hitchhike from Harman to Whitmer after basketball practice. Why sacrifice our kids for a new gym at another school, Harman has a great gym. Harman has a beautiful school with a strong history of pride, "Panther Pride" full of hardworking people who have supported the school and its community since at least back in the 1950's. Do you all realize what you are doing to this part of Randolph County, yes we still live in Randolph County. The school is the backbone of a community when you take the school away, you destroy the community, you destroy the kids, they will be scarred forever. The students will be just another number on the wall. You don't care for our kids in this part of the County, you have tried to close the school for years! Just because of the God almighty dollar and greed. They will be going to a school where they are not wanted and where they do not want to go. They will be like a slave who is made to do what the slave owner wants done. Bye, Bye Freedom! I worked for the DOH for 27 ½ years and I have seen it all. We had 4 feet of snow on Middle Mountain

220, weather is fine, blue sky, no problem. It starts spitting snow on Kelly Mountain, not to bad, then comes Middle Mountain where say there is 3 inches of snow, onward to Middle Mountain, where there is 6 inches of snow and yep the next one is the good one, Rich Mountain where there is car after car and 3 trucks hung up at the Jessie Dolly curve again it is dark and the bus has slid in the ditch, stranded with pre-school (4 to 5 year olds) elementary, middle, high school students and a bus driver that are scared, no cell service, no way for any help anytime soon and the school parking lot is full of parents just praying no one gets hurt and out of their mind with worry and that's just one day out of 180 days they will be traveling. Is it worth it? I forgot it is not your children, it is only the children from Harman. We have not had a bad winter for a while, but watch out it is coming. When I went to school, we never had a snow day, we went to school no matter what. We didn't see the ground from November to April. I just hope and pray every day that someone, somewhere will come to their senses and see that there may be a better solution to your God all mighty project, before it is to late! I understand it is your priority to educate the kids, but what about their safety? It is worth them losing their life, can you put a cost on a child's life? To you, I bet you can because it is just children from Harman, but they are our kids and mean everything to us.

...discussed the numerous safety concerns, ... Parents, grandparents, ... distance, hazards, and length; leaving students sparse time for play, study, or after school activities that entail from closure. However, beyond these reasons there are social and economic concerns for the community, and long term success concerns for the students who experience closure.

The sense of community is impacted by the loss of a school. This was the experience in Coalton whose residents were dispirited after their school's closure. Contrast that with Brandywine Elementary in Pendleton County, a small community school similar to Harman, with a student population of 107 elementary children with approximately 50% receiving free or reduced lunch. Brandywine ranks #13 of WV elementary schools, and is designated as a GreatSchool (<https://www.greatschools.org>). Pendleton invests in their children with a \$16,604/student cost, 9.7:1 student/teacher ratio, a school counselor, nurse, music and physical education programs (23-24 [schooldigger.com](http://schooldigger.com)). Since their award there has been a beautiful new country store built which is a draw for anyone passing through. Concurrent spending for Harman School was \$12,356 with student/teacher ratio of 10:1 (23-24 [schooldigger.com](http://schooldigger.com)). Enrollment dropped precipitously during the first attempt to close the school. At that time the community, led by Linda Teter, mobilized the community to raise funds to renovate the school, with volunteers doing much in-kind work. Notably the school facility was left in great condition, and was renewed as a source of pride for the community. Unfortunately we experienced the COVID pandemic. Following that, school enrollment continued to decline. Perhaps some then saw home schooling as a more viable alternative. Another possibility is that the tenuous nature of the school's existence may have influenced those parents' school choice decisions. Success is possible at the Harman School. Currently graduation rates are 100%. In 2009 the Harman school ranked 92.9% in WV. County Board of Education

Lastly, long term effects are seen in children who experience school closures. Kim (2024) identified immediate detrimental effects on student's test scores and behavior. Although some improvement in test scores occurred over time, behavioral issues persist. More worrisome are the longer term effects which includes a decline in attainment of post high school education, decreased employment options, and lowered earnings at ages 25-27. The greatest impact is on students who experience their school closing during high school; especially if they are from schools that were originally low performing, or if they are from homes that are economically disadvantaged.

News reports have emphasized financial reasons for closing Harman, focusing solely on the need to decrease per pupil spending and economies of scale. As a Board of Education and as an Administrator who purports to care about the welfare, the safety, and educational development of each student, there needs to be more evidence of care for the students of Harman and Pickens.

John Rank History for all elementary school students at Harman Elementary/High School

School Digger data sources: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Census Bureau and the West Virginia Department of Education.

Barrow, Lisa and Rouse, Cecilia Elena (2002). Using Market Valuation to Assess Public School Spending. (Working Paper 9054). Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w9054>.

Abstract: In this paper we use a 'market-based' approach to examine whether increased

Abstract. Each year, over a thousand public schools in the US close due to declining enrollments and chronic low performance, displacing hundreds of thousands of students. Using Texas administrative data and empirical strategies that are used within-student across-time and within-school across-cohort variation, I explore the impact of school closures on students' educational and labor market outcomes. The findings indicate that experiencing school closures results in disruptions in both test scores and behavior. While the drop in test scores is recovered within three years, behavioral issues persist. This study further finds decreases in post-secondary education attainment, employment, and earnings at ages 25–27. These impacts are particularly pronounced among students in secondary education, Hispanic students, and those from originally low-performing schools and economically disadvantaged families.

John Harman and Becky Holt

...is best for them and in this particular situation, I want both my boys to attend a school that is safe, has good teachers and a stable environment and Harman is where they deserve to be.

I am asking the board to please vote to keep our school open. Vote for our children and the stability they deserve.

Thank you

School that has been sent to the State Superintendent's office and I would like to point out a few things that are not accurate. Harman School is approximately 30 minutes from Elkins and the majority of the people that live here do tend to travel to Elkins for shopping, however they choose to do so at their convenience and are not forced to travel across three mountains five days a week. Our little town does have a restaurant located up the street from the school, called the Allegheny Restaurant, which serves breakfast and lunch and has some fine home cooking. The town of Harman also has a gas station, called Midway Service Station, which also serves food, baked goods and sells crafts, gifts and novelty items. There is also another gas station in the town of Dryfork, which is 4.1 miles from the school and they also serve as a grocery store, prepare hot food, serve seasonal ice cream and have a deli. The town of Harman is also home to the Grant County Bank, the Harman Post Office, the Harman Fire Department, the Pioneer Memorial Library, Harman Health Center, Harman Pillbox Pharmacy, Randolph County EMS, Harman Senior Center, which also serves lunch for dine in or carry out 5 days a week, Presbyterian Church, Roy's small hardware store and the Dollar General Store, which is located right beside Harman School, so our little town has the major necessities we need and as stated earlier, we choose to travel to Elkins at our convenience for shopping outside the town of Harman. There are more academic opportunities in Elkins, only because they have taken everything from Harman, such as our Music program and more recently our Art program

late night game and arriving home late and then getting up extra earlier to catch the bus and commute over an 1 ½ to get back to school. I fear this would cause the students to suffer academically. Our children currently have a 40 to 45 minute bus ride to Harman school and board the bus as early as 6:30AM. Our children would be on the bus an additional 30 to 40 minutes across three of the worst mountains in West Virginia, which would cause them to get up much earlier, leave earlier and return later in the evening. At the present time, there has not been a transportation plan set in motion to transport our children from Harman to Elkins. There has been talk about adding an additional bus or buses to accomplish the transportation process, which if there is such a tight budget, where would these funds come from? There are so many unanswered questions regarding this proposal and the lack of planning involved as to making this happen is as crazy as the proposal to close and consolidate. It seems it would be more economical to combine a couple of elementary schools in Elkins with very little commuting time versus consolidating Harman and sending our children across three mountains putting their lives at risk every day and especially during the winter months. The local fire department has stated that calls in the winter months increase to 83% due to the weather and dangerous road conditions. The road is often closed in the winter months because of accidents and throwing a school bus or two full of children into an already bad situation, might very well prove to be

they deserve and could receive at Harman School. The impact statement also says that Harman is not handicapped accessible, but our school is on one floor with level entry to the front door as well and there is a ramp that allows access to the exit next to the library. All classrooms are located on the ground floor as well as the cafeteria and gym. It also states if the school closes, the building could possibly be repurposed for community use, where would the funds come from to complete this repurpose process? All children are a gift and no one child is better than any other, they all need to be treated equally. Students already have enough stress from dealing with everyday peer pressure, this closure and consolidation would add to their stress with added travel times and an earlier start and later ending to their day, thus affecting their academic performance. I beg of you to please vote to keep our children in their school, an environment that they are comfortable, succeeding and doing well in, please, please think of the students first and foremost, not just dollar signs and keep our school open.

Respectfully a concerned citizen

placed in this very same situation facing us today of closure and consolidation with non- other than Harman School. It was a trying time for all of us and even this many years later it still has not been forgotten. Next year, my grandson will be in 2nd grade with his little brother not far behind but it appears now that there may be the possibility that neither one of them will have the opportunity of being Haman Graduates like so many of their family members before them. I am trying to find something "GOOD" in all this but frankly I haven't been able to and personally, neither do I feel that this is in the Best Interest for my grandson's education and it most definitely is not the safest. On my consolidated bus ride I faced no mountains between Whitmer and Harman, but there are those four of the most treacherous mountains in the state of WV that will face them on that possible trip to Elkins and back each day. Dr. Dilley, it is apparent that our county is in a financial crisis, but remember, our students did not create this situation. There has to be other options and alternatives to our school closure. You hold a position in which you are required to make very difficult decisions for our children and I respect that, but remember

Letter from Linda Teter

Harman Graduate & Harman Business Owner

I'm writing concerning the closure of Harman and Pickens schools. We the people of this community and taxpayers are deeply concerned for these children.

The hazardous and lengthy trip over these mountains — not only in the winter, but summer, too — with all the transit trucks running Route 33. If I was a bus driver I would quit before I would take this responsibility on.

In one of the Board addendums, I read that there is nothing in Harman to sustain this school. Well, that's truly wrong. We may not have a Walmart, but we have the Harman Presbyterian Church, the Harman Post Office, a Dollar General store, Ray's Home Sales, the State Road garage, the Harman Fire Department, Harman EMS, the Harman Health Clinic and Pharmacy, the Harman Senior Center, the Town of Harman Sewage and Water Plant, and the Grant County Bank, which donated several thousands of dollars to repair the school in 2010.

We also have the Allegheny Restaurant, the Harman VFW Post,

administration accountable. Better yet, can Donald Trump. I'm sure he will find funding from a federal level to hold both of these schools intact.

I'm a proud graduate of Harman High School. I was born and raised in Harman and would not want to change. Keep these schools open.

A concerned taxpayer,

L.M. Teter

Harman

Mr. Meadows called my father to ask him if he could spend the day riding on a school bus in the Harman area. He told my father that the folks in the Harman area were complaining that their kids were getting home late and sometimes getting to the school late.

My father spent the snowy day with a local school bus driver name Herman Tingler. At the end of the bus run, my father returned to the Board office and told Meadows that they needed a least one extra bus. He went on to say, with the hills and hollows that these bus drivers have to go through, especially on this snowy day, it's taking them a little longer to get those kids to and from school. Meadows went on to grant the Harman community another bus.

The issue is safety, especially during the winter months. The drive, one way, to Elkins from Harman is 25 miles. Approximately 30 minutes, and that's just from Harman. That doesn't count the time to come out of Gandy, Pennington Road, Bonner Mountain Road. Don't forget Whitmer, Job, Camden and the back roads that come out of those areas. With those locations, you've just added a couple miles or more, and a longer trip.

With Pickens you have a very similar situation, 25 miles to Mill Creek. Approximately 40 minutes long. You have the Pickens Road, which comes off the Adolph Road. Add to that other communities like Blue Rock and Czar. To get to and from both, where Pickens and Harman have to go, is challenging. Especially during the winter months. And chains don't always guarantee a safe trip.

Early hours for the parents, and the kids will rarely get home in a timely fashion. This disrupts the family unit. Kids will be too tired and may not have the energy to help Mom and Dad, with little study time and little time with friends.

Has the Board ever traveled these routes during the winter? Have you traveled the winding Adolph Road and hills to and from Pickens during the winter? To get to Harman, you must cross over four mountains: Cheat, Shaver's, Middle, Rich.

Imagine winter time and what it's like for both routes.

Clark Martin

Elkins

BRAD JOHNSON

Executive Editor

[bjohnson@theintermountain.com](mailto:bjohnson@theintermountain.com)



and lost control," according to the release. *"The driver was not a local resident and was in the area for tourism purposes."*

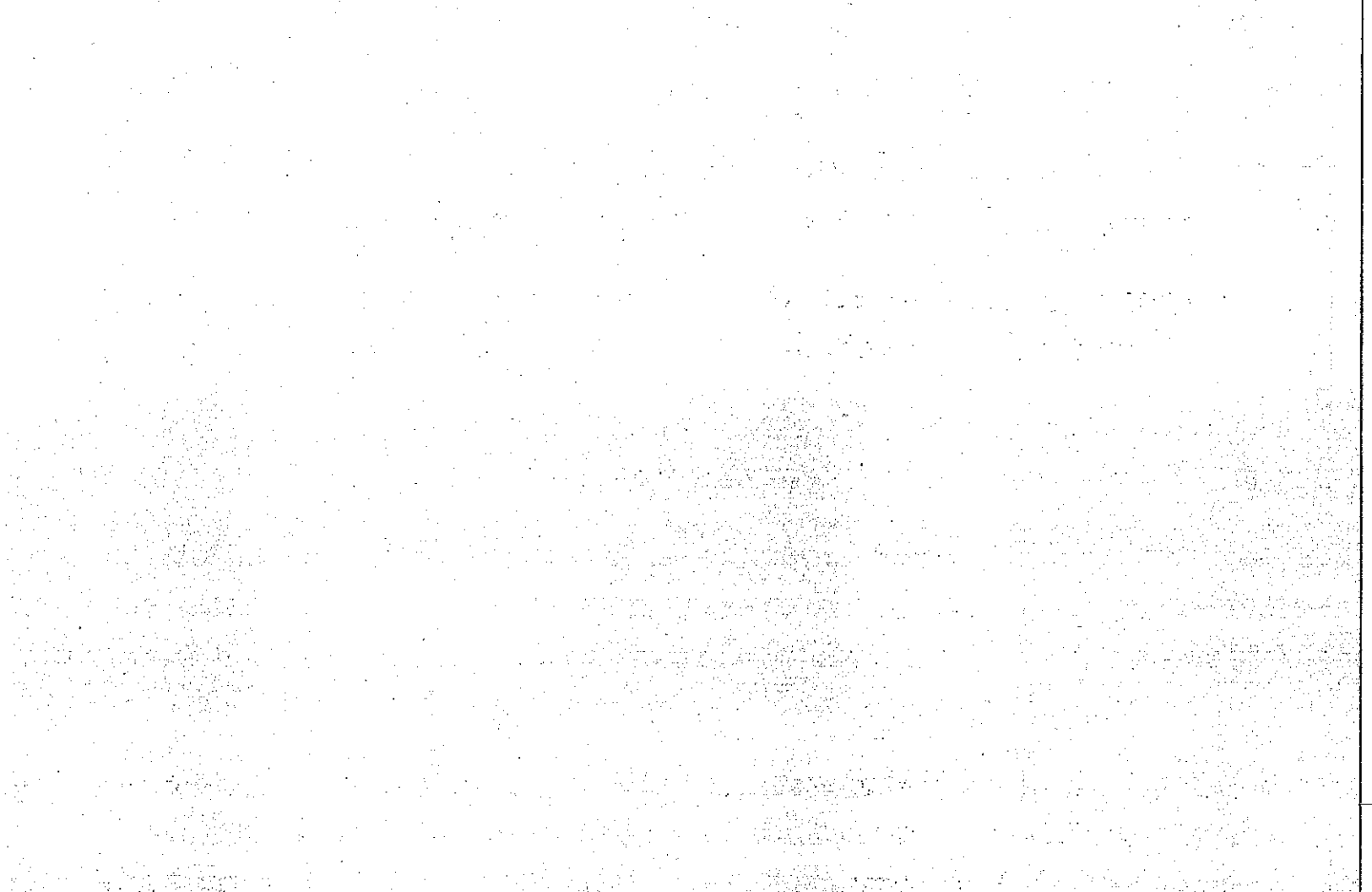
After the accident debris was removed from the road, Pingley gave the driver a courtesy transport to Elkins, where he checked into a hotel, the release states.

Also responding to the scene were the Whitmer Volunteer Fire Department and the Randolph County EMS.

On Sunday, Randolph County 911 received a call from the Elks Springs Resort and Fly Shop about a single-vehicle accident on Dry Branch Road.

Pingley met with the driver and the occupants of the vehicle, who were uninjured, at the Broadwater Lodge, according to a Randolph County Sheriff's Office press release. The driver said he wasn't used to driving in the snow, and the vehicle went over an embankment near the Elk River.

The individuals *"were unable to call for assistance due to the lack of cell phone service in the area,"* and then *"had to walk two miles in below freezing temperatures to find the nearest cabin with people,"* the release states.



# Sleep In Middle and High School Students



Children and adolescents who do not get enough sleep have a higher risk for many health and behavior problems.

Learn how much sleep students need and how many are not getting it.

## Importance of Sleep

Children and adolescents who do not get enough sleep have a higher risk of obesity, diabetes, injuries, poor mental health, and problems with attention and behavior.<sup>1-4</sup>

How much sleep someone needs depends on their age. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine has recommended that children aged 6–12 years should regularly sleep 9–12 hours per 24 hours and teenagers aged 13–18 years should sleep 8–10 hours per 24 hours.<sup>1</sup>

## Are Students Getting Enough Sleep?

CDC analyzed data from the 2015 national and state Youth Risk Behavior Surveys.<sup>5</sup> Students were asked how much sleep they usually got on school nights. Students who were 6 to 12 years old and who reported sleeping less than 9 hours were



Students who get enough sleep may have fewer attention and behavior problems.

### **Middle school students (grades 6-8)**

- Students in 9 states were included in the study
- About 6 out of 10 (57.8%) did not get enough sleep on school nights

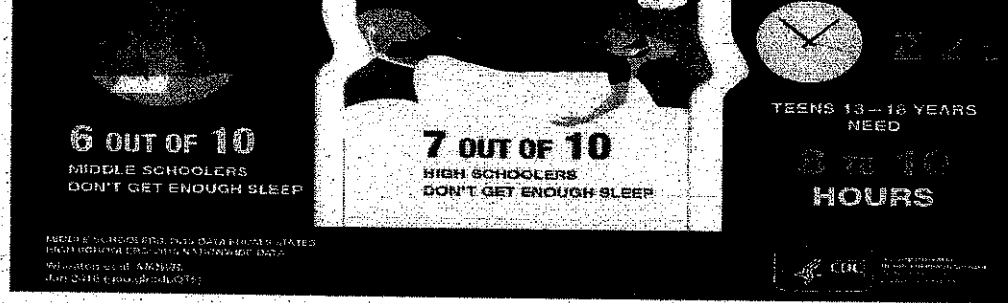
### **High school students (grades 9-12)**

- National sample
- About 7 out of 10 (72.7%) did not get enough sleep on school nights

## **Help Your Child Get the Sleep They Need**

Parents can support good sleep habits such as:

- Sticking to a consistent sleep schedule during the school year



Zzzzzz ... Sleepy Kids: Most Students Need More Sleep. Many middle school and high school students do not get the sleep they need.

Wheaton et al. MMWR. Jan 2018.

## References

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2. Owens J; Adolescent Sleep Working Group; Committee on Adolescence. Insufficient sleep in adolescents and young adults: an update on causes and consequences. *Pediatrics* 2014;134:e921-32.
3. Lowry R, Eaton DK, Foli K, McKnight-Eily L, Perry G, Galuska DA. Association of sleep duration with obesity among US high school students. *J Obes* 2012;2012:476914.
4. Fitzgerald CT, Messias E, Buysse DJ. Teen sleep and suicidality: results from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveys of 2007 and 2009. *J Clin Sleep Med* 2011;7:351-6.
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6. Short MA, Gradisar M, Lack LC, et al. A cross-cultural comparison of sleep duration between US and Australian adolescents: the effect of school start time, parent-set bedtimes, and extracurricular load. *Health Educ Behav* 2010;37:222-31.

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*Rex Vance*

To whom it may concern,

My name is Rex Vance. I've been a resident of Harman, WV for nearly 60 years. My wife, my three children, and myself all graduated from Harman School. I'm writing to you because of your decision to close Harman School; a beautiful school with a sense of pride that no other school has. A school that remains today because of a supportive and hard-working community that built it back after the 2017 flood.

Do you realize what your decision will do to our part of Randolph County? Yes, Harman School is a part of Randolph County, and it and its people deserve the same respect as any other school in the county. Schools are the backbone of any community but even more so in a small town like Harman. If Harman School is closed, it will destroy our entire way of life and will permanently scar the children forever.

K-12 age children's well-being will be put at unnecessary risk due to extra long bus rides to and from a different school in good road conditions let alone four snowy mountains during the winter. They will have no time for extracurricular activities, time for homework, family time, or rest.

I worked for Harman, WV DOH for approximately 25 years. I can attest that the closure of Harman School will be a failure simply because of the bus routes. There are children that live nearly thirty minutes from Harman School let alone to Elkins. Then in the wintertime you have the following mountains to battle due to their icy, slick, cold, and dangerous conditions: Kelly, Shavers, Middle, and Rich Mountains.

Speaking of the Harman DOH, I'm certain they don't even have the proper amount of staff or equipment to maintain roads leading to Elkins, especially early in the mornings. Will Elkins, WV DOH supply equipment and workers to be sure that these roads will be open and safe for Harman buses to drive our children? I assume not.

Harman students aren't accustomed to being "just a number". They have personal relationships with all their classmates and teachers. Harman isn't just a school, it's a family. For some children, it's the only family that they will ever experience. Shame on you for wanting to take something so life-changing away from anyone, let alone a child.

Children from Harman will be forced to attend a school where they don't want to go and where they aren't wanted. If Elkins community members wouldn't send their children to Harman, then why would one think it is a good idea to send Harman students to Elkins? The hypocrisy is astounding.

*Please Forward To All Board Members*

Those who support this closure have made it clear that they don't care about what this will do to our community and most importantly to the children and their families. It's evident that those who are in power have tunnel vision on one factor: money. Greed is the reason for all these destructive decisions.

Versus uprooting a large number of children and their families, why don't we investigate the last several years of financials to determine why and who is responsible for the county's monetary dilemma? Why should innocent children have to suffer for grown adults' poor decisions? Closing schools and destroying communities are not justified for filling a corrupt agenda.

For what it's worth, I, my family, friends, and everyone I know in the community beg you to have mercy on Harman School and all lives that would be negatively impacted if the closure of our school is finalized.

Truly,

  
Rex Vance

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Trish Bucher

fiscal year	central office administrators		Classroom teachers		curriculum specialist		Total administrative Support Personnel		Prof. student support		school counselors		Director of Support Services		Total	Student headcount	
	FTE	avg salary	FTE	average salary\$	FTE	average salary\$	personnel	FTE	Average salary\$	FTE	Average salary\$	FTE	Average salary\$	personnel			
24-25	8.5	88,966.09	272.91	56,477.47	3	61,777.75	26	203	32,007.41	15	59,958.87	7	53,743.99	3.2	78,730.02	550	3,488
23-24	8.5	85,657.47	275.5	53,834.85	3	67,772.04	26	194	30,720.15	14	54,184.76	7	49,202.09	3.2	75,168.62	543	3,532
22-23	10	84,413.94	281	51,227.98	2	73,654.28	27.5	190.5	28,276.03	15	55,534.27	7	46,811.84	1.7	73,229.65	547.5	3,634
21-22	9.5	82,217.73	280.5	48,544.22	2	70,782.08	27	194	27,482.10	15	53,413.59	8	43,948.64	1.2	75,404.80	556	3,623
20-21	8.5	80,310.25	281	48,742.95	1	74,802.00	26	183.5	27,963.41	14	53,522.77	5	45,635.28	1.2	74,700.00	536	3,789
19-20	9	78,083.11	283.5	49,168.59	1	74,097.60	26.5	185.5	28,000.84	14	53,788.76	6	44,856.32	2.2	72,746.51	535.5	3,866
18-19	9	77,743.87	287	46,992.14	1	70,848.00	26.5	187.5	26,675.71	14	52,310.61	4	42,855.23	2.2	66,236.05	542	3,949
17-18	8	76,352.87	291	44,980.98	NA	NA	25.5	196.5	25,339.97	14	49,219.87	3	42,485.37	NA	NA	553	4,040

source: <https://wvde.us/about-us/finance/school-finance/school-finance-data>

Fiscal Year	Number of students		Total Teachers (FTEs)(I rounded to whole #)			
	Randolph	WV (public)	USA (public)	USA	WV	USA
2023-2024	3534	3982	2695	268	334	180
2022-2023	3638	4118	2695	273	328	178
2021-2022	3623	4434	2642	281	334	177
2020-2021	3790	4455	2674	282	339	179
2019-2020	3870	4623	2731	285	325	158
2018-2019	3955	4872	2755	287	332	170
2017-2018	4040	4950	2917	291	338	177
2016-2017	4048	4804	2734	297	340	169

Source: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolmap/>

The declining enrollment is apparent on state level too.

WV rankings show a reason for the enrollment decline.

rankings are not good for WV and worst for Randolph county with Test scores showing 55th of 55

- WalletHub, 2025: West Virginia ranked 45th overall.
- World Population Review, 2025: West Virginia ranked 46th.
- U.S. News & World Report, 2025: West Virginia ranked 47th for Pre-K - 12 education.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024: West Virginia ranked 48th out of 50 for education outcomes.

year	total prof headcount	# students/ prof pers	Total service personnel	# student/ service pers	Total personnel	
2024 - 2025	3,488	347.41	10.04	203	17.18	550
2023 - 2024	3,532	349	10.12	194	18.21	543
2022 - 2023	3,634	357	10.18	190.5	19.08	547.5
2021 - 2022	3,623	362	10.01	194	18.68	556
2020 - 2021	3,789	352.5	10.75	183.5	20.65	536
2019 - 2020	3,866	350	11.05	185.5	20.84	535.5
2018 - 2019	3,949	354.5	11.14	187.5	21.06	542
2017 - 2018	4,040	356.5	11.33	196.5	20.56	553

source: <https://wvde.us/about-us/finance/school-finance/school-finance-data>

2019 ratio:  $3949/542 = 7.29$

2025 ratio:  $3488/550 = 6.34$

$3488/7.29 = 478$

Total terminations required to match 2019 ratio =  $550 - 478 = 72$  on average

Using Just FTEs :  $(3488/11.33=308)$   $347 - 308 = 39$  positions need eliminated to get back to 2019 numbers

Harman has on website I saw 19 staff listed which totals 12.5 FTEs

Pickens has 6 staff or 4.5 FTE

So closure of Harman and Pickens gives you 17FTEs at best , with many to be retained anyway due to seniority.

Almost all the schools were at, or above 90% spending on staff according to Mr Smith's presentation

A STAFFING SOLUTION NEEDED not closure.

# Harman Success Criteria **FILE COPY**

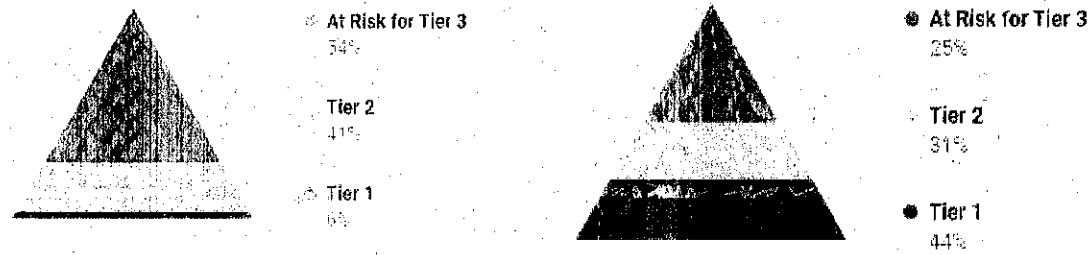
*Jessica Pennington*

Last year, the leadership team asked Harman School to show improvement in three areas: attendance, GSA scores, and i-Ready benchmark scores. Harman School showed improvement in all three.

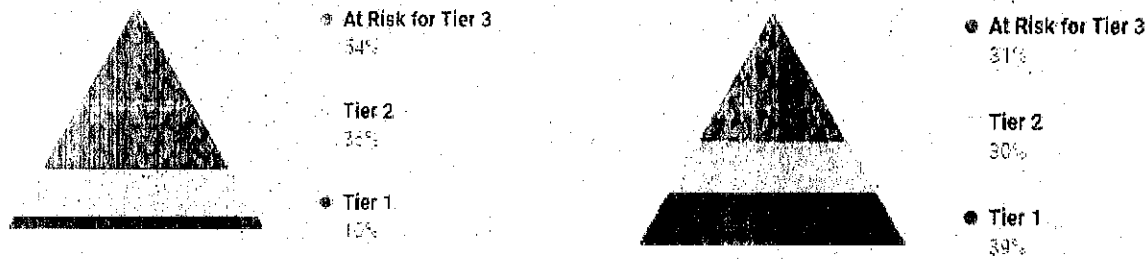
Our current attendance rate is 95.47%, which is a great improvement over last year's attendance rate of 93.4%. In addition, our school attendance is better than the state average and all the potential receiving schools at the end of school year 2025.

On the 2023/2024 WV Summative Assessment, 57% of our students scored at partial mastery or above. In 2024/2025, 61% of our students scored at partial mastery or above on their Summative Assessment which is a 4% increase.

The following two pyramids show the i-Ready benchmark data for 2024-2025 in math. The first pyramid shows benchmark one and the second shows the end-of-the-year benchmark. You can see the large amount of growth in the green. At the beginning of the year, 6% of our students were at grade level while at the end of the year, 44% of our students were at grade level. This shows 38% growth.



The following two pyramids show i-Ready benchmark data for 2024-2025 in English. At the beginning of the year, 10% of our students were at grade level while at the end of year, 39% of our students were at grade level. This shows 29% growth.



Hello, my name is Beth Henry-Vance. I have a few points to share on behalf of the Harman Local School Improvement Council, as well as some personal comments on the impact that the proposed closure would have on my children, who are 12 and 9 years old.

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~~One main point is test scores. This board asked Harman to focus on improving attendance and test scores, and the~~ school has succeeded in both of those areas. This board has a copy of that information posted on the county website, and it shows that the school body has worked hard to make those improvements.

Another main point that has been brought up several times concerns transportation. This board has not been provided with an accurate picture of bus route times.

The proposed bus route time for Bus 80A on page 27 in the Impact Statement shows the overall net increase will be 8 minutes. That bus currently has a stop at the Sully Road intersection at Alpena. For that bus to continue past that location and drive to Elkins Middle School, according to Google maps, it would add 13 miles, or 18 minutes in a car, with no additional stops included in that travel time. So how does the information that you were provided with show an increased travel time of only 8 minutes overall? If it's because the bus will stay on the main road only, and not travel side roads: No 1, that is not feasible for many, if not most, parents and guardians, and No. 2, that still does not account for the time necessary for stops. The presented estimated times might be accurate for a car. But driving a bus with children on mountainous roads and making multiple stops will always take longer.

On a personal level, I want to point out the increased total amount of time that my children would be on the bus if they were to travel to Elkins Middle School. I drop my children off at Harman school in the morning, leaving my house at 7:20 a.m. and arriving at the school at 7:24 a.m. They ride the bus home in the afternoon, leaving the school at 2:56 and arriving at my driveway at 3:03 p.m.

They have approximately 11 minutes of total travel time per day.

If Harman is closed and they would travel by bus, what would the actual one-way total be for their travel time? The proposed total route time for Bus 80A shows 52 minutes, but it is likely to be 60 minutes or more. So overall, they would have two hours a day, or more. That is life changing and would have a huge negative impact on my kids.

There would very likely be concerns about children needing to use the restroom and a likelihood of increased bullying incidents, not to mention the extreme weather problems that happen every year on our mountainous roads, with snow often falling every month from October through May. As I said last year, Harman School had two snow days during the first week of May in 2024, when our bus driver had 8 inches of snow at her house.

What will happen when an accident and/or poor road conditions cause the main road to be closed during a school day? Where would the students be sent? How would they be cared for? How would parents and guardians be notified? This should actually be something that is already in place in case of a sports team traveling at night or just in poor weather conditions in general each school year. However, sending Harman students over to Elkins on a daily basis will dramatically increase the chances of this happening.

I ask you, on behalf of my children and all students at Harman, to please consider the bus route dangers and the tremendously negative impacts that a school closure would have on the community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Kelley

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<b>Estimated Cost of Harman School</b>	<b>Projected Savings of closure</b>
Utilities \$99,872.36	Utilities \$0
Personnel \$1,262,501.70	Personnel \$99,980 (2 professional and 1/2 service)
Maintenance \$23,843.15	Maintenance \$0
Transportation \$100,826.60	Transportation -\$2500 (Bus Depreciation) -\$29,131 (new bus driver average salary) -\$10,082.66 (fuel cost pulled from impact statement)
Other \$122,111.00	Other \$0
	SB 300 -\$100,000
<b>Total \$1,610,154.81</b>	<b>Total -\$41,733.66</b>

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## Rationale Against Changing the Closure Recommendation After the 30-Day Notice

- **WV Code and WVDE Policy Requirements:**

Under **W. Va. Code §18-5-13a** and **WVDE Policy 6204**, once a closure or consolidation proposal has been noticed and hearings scheduled, any substantive changes, such as removing a school from the proposal, require restarting the entire statutory process. This means new 30-day notices, re-advertising hearings, and amended supporting documentation. The resulting delay would push the district beyond the December deadlines set by the WVDE's State of Emergency directives, placing Randolph County Schools in noncompliance.

- **Financial Stability and Enrollment Loss:**

The postponement of Coalton's closure would only provide a temporary reprieve for one year. Current enrollment loss of 121 students this year, with 30 to 50 more projected by the end of the year, equates to 1.2 to 1.6 million dollars in reduced state aid. This reality would have Coalton on the closure list for next year. Failure to act now will expedite larger and more painful closures in the near future, including the possibility of Tygarts Valley.

- **Consistency and Precedent:**

By giving the Coalton community one more year, the board risks reinforcing the perception, already established during the Harman proposal, that vocal community opposition can overturn board decisions. WVDE Policy 6200 emphasizes consistency and fairness in planning, and deviating now encourages similar tactics in every future closure.

- **Equity Between Schools:**

With both Pickens and Coalton producing comparable cost savings, the question becomes one of equity. Why prioritize saving Coalton, which is centrally located, over Pickens, where students face more difficult commutes? WVDE's guidance requires equitable treatment of schools under closure consideration.

- **Personnel and Budget Planning:**

Under **W. Va. Code §18A-2-7** and **§18A-4-7a**, all personnel transfers and reductions in force must be completed by May 1. Proceeding with both closures this year allows all staffing changes to be resolved in one coordinated process so that staff and students can transition and settle into their new assignments for the 2026-27 school year. The disruption, while significant this spring, will be contained and minimized in future years. Delaying Coalton's closure until next year prolongs instability. Staff would remain uncertain about their positions, students would face

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another round of transition, and morale would suffer as employees and families anticipate another closure fight. In addition, keeping Coalton open obliges the district to carry fixed staffing costs for a building with unsustainable enrollment, further straining a budget that is already under state oversight.

- **Legal Ramifications of Altering Notices:**

Canceling and amending current hearing notices exposes the district to legal challenge. Parents and stakeholders could allege violations of WVDE Policy 6204's notice provisions, creating potential for grievances or injunctions. More importantly, the delay would prevent timely compliance with the WVDE's State of Emergency requirements.

- **Leadership Team and WVDE Collaboration:**

The closure recommendations represent months of collaboration between the district's Leadership Team, Jason Long, Micah Whitlow (WVDE Facilities and Closures), and the WVDE Office of Accountability. Overturning this coordinated process now disregards that work and penalizes the leadership for proactively planning to stabilize the district's finances.

- **Board Transition Considerations:**

Outgoing board members are fully briefed and positioned to make an informed decision. Deferring Coalton's closure would leave incoming members, without the same level of context, responsible for navigating an even more contentious decision next year, which would prolong controversy into another election cycle.

“The Butterfly effect strikes the community school in Harman West Virginia.”

Scientists all over the world like to quote Edward Lorenz’s Butterfly Effect Theory that even the smallest changes in initial conditions can lead to drastically different outcomes. Several months ago Harman school in Harman West Virginia was informed that their Randolph County School Board was expected to follow the protocol of the State Board of Education, too close and consolidated. The whole community of Harman immediately came together to stop this from happening but it quickly became evident that the State School Board and Administration of Randolph County BoE would simply follow orders and do what was expected of them.

Four of the five members of Randolph County BoE unexpectedly exercised great courage and representing the will of the community that elected them said no to the order. This small act of respect to the school and children caused initially further pressure to conform and eventually an emergency order declared by the State System not to be removed until they complied. This action firmly established the 4 members as heroes and eventually legends because Harman School’s amazing Principal, teachers and students had the crucial time to rally the assistance of some of the greatest parties in the region with ideas for quickly making Harman school the best darn school in West Virginia. The principal had already made monumental improvements and on August 14th evening will be released to the World not just a plan, because the next day when the children arrive they will be greeted by the first WV Sovereign School with all the disciplines removed by the county system replaced such as Art, creative writing, and even a new science lab. New uniforms, for the fifth grade Anacondas and their fellow authors in Suriname SA the Hellbenders, have been delivered for the teachers and students. Lab equipment for the science teacher has been ordered for the science program. Most important work is being prepared to fix the Tech. Room and CNC, 3D prices checked out to make all students prepared for the demands of industry. On August 14,2025 Harman School changed it’s stars to start on the mission to be the the Best Darn School in West Virginia and a model for the future of education.

We all wish to thank you for what you have done and pray your courage holds. Your small act of kindness is leading to monumental changes in education for all our children. The Harman Sovereign School.

May1, 2025

## School Consolidation

Washington State House Education Commission-Study Session  
on School Organization.

### An extensive Study

1. Cost Effectiveness— —-Small schools are less costly per student.
2. Student Achievement —- Strong negative results in larger schools than smaller schools and program quality is better in small schools. There is more of a teacher family and team.
3. Consolidation cost— — The increased costs of salaries, work space., transportation and other operational expenses effects expected savings.
- 4, Impacts on communities are terrible.

There is no proof of tangible success in the quality of education of children. Case in-point no improvement in 4 decades in West Virginia.

Marshall University Article “Marginalized Student Perspective of school consolidation in Rural West Virginia” Marshall University Digital Scholar1-1-2008

Dear State Board members,

I am writing to you out of urgency, fear, and absolute desperation on behalf of the families in our community. The future losing of our beloved Harman School will be placing our children in danger every single day, and we have reached a point where we feel unheard, ignored, and left without options. And very unapologetically angry.

With the future closure impending, our students will be forced onto dangerous bus routes that cross three mountains—roads that are treacherous even for experienced drivers. There are state placed signs that read tractor trailers must have chains before you leave the town of Elkins, West Virginia. These buses will be made to travel in conditions that would make any parent or drivers heart stop: ice, fog, steep drop-offs, and sharp turns that no school bus should ever have to navigate, especially in the winter. These said mountains have been shut down multiple times in the winter months. Every morning, we watch our children leave, and many of us silently pray they come home safely. No parent should live or worry endlessly like this. No child should have to risk their lives for an education.

The bus rides are far too long, with some children spending over two hours each day on the road instead of in a classroom or at home with their families. These exhausting rides will be taking a physical and emotional toll on our kids.

We are also deeply troubled by what we believe were misleading claims in the impact statement used to justify closing Harman School. Out right blatant lies from our superintendent of Randolph County School, Dr. Shawn Dilly, who ironically claims safety first. Critical concerns—transportation dangers, student fatigue, community disruption, and safety risks—were brushed aside or outright ignored. Many parents feel deceived, and we are begging for someone on a higher up to hear us.

To make matters worse, we face a severe shortage of bus drivers, leading to irregular schedules, bus routes being canceled all together in Randolph County, and additional risks. Our system is stretched thin, and it is our children who are paying the price.

We are pleading for your help. Our community feels abandoned, unheard, our concerns are more than valid, and we need someone with influence and visibility to step in and ensure these children are no longer placed in harm's way. We respectfully ask for your attention, your voice, and your support in pushing for an investigation or review of the school closure, the flawed impact statement, and—most urgently—the dangerous transportation conditions our children are subjected to every day.

Please I beg of you, don't not approve the closure of Harman School.

Please help us protect our kids. We are desperate for someone to finally hear us.

With sincere respect and urgency,

Jessica Pennington

Dear Mr. Hardesty

I'm writing you in concern for the decision Randolph County Board of Education made on October 8 to close Harman School and transport the children to Elkins to attend. My major concern is the treacherous mountains between Harman and Elkins, plus some children will be on a bus an extended time due to where their residence is located. Also as you can see from attached photos the Randolph County schools can't get children located in Elkins to school due to lack of bus driver shortage. So how is transporting children 23 miles going to work out due to shortage of buses? Please if you can help with not passing the waiver they are requesting for the time children will be on a bus to travel. Also our children's safety should be top priority in making such a life changing decision for families in Harman community. Again I ask for your support in this matter of our school closure.

Sincerely  
Melanie Evans

Dear Members of the West Virginia Board of Education and LOCEA,

I am writing as a parent and resident of Randolph County to respectfully urge you to reject the Randolph County Board of Education's decision to close Harman School at the end of the current academic year and to initiate consolidation during the upcoming summer break.

Randolph County is the largest and one of the most mountainous counties in West Virginia, and the proposed consolidation plan poses significant safety, accessibility, and compliance concerns that directly contradict both state code and Board policy.

### **1. Violation of West Virginia Code §18-2E-5d: Student Transportation Standards**

Under WV Code §18-2E-5d, elementary student travel times are recommended not to exceed 30 minutes one way, and new routes established through consolidation may not exceed 45 minutes without written approval from the State Board of Education. Routes exceeding 60 minutes are prohibited.

According to Randolph County's own figures, students from the Harman area will face bus rides of 40–45 minutes and longer without accounting for stops, road construction, inclement weather, or emergencies. In winter months, the designated mountain roads frequently close due to hazardous conditions and multiple vehicle accidents. My husband, a longtime volunteer firefighter, has personally responded to numerous such incidents and has had to block traffic for safety. These conditions render the proposed travel routes unsafe and non-compliant with both the spirit and letter of §18-2E-5d.

## **2. Failure to Comply with WVBE Policy 6204 and Policy 4336**

Policy 6204 requires county boards to evaluate the impact on student travel times, safety, and accessibility before any closure or consolidation and to request waivers of Policy 4336 only when no safer or reasonable alternative exists.

The county's proposal disregards these requirements. There has been no clear demonstration that longer travel times and hazardous mountain routes are the only feasible option, nor that such routes can ensure reliable, year-round access for young children. Multiple options have been suggested and proposed to the Randolph County Board of Education, including elementary school consolidations solely amongst the schools located within the town of Elkins that would serve less community impact and travel times for students.

## **3. Adverse Impact on Students with Disabilities and Low-Income Families**

Beyond statutory compliance, the proposed closure fails to consider the practical and humanitarian consequences for families. My five-year-old son is autistic and cannot safely ride the bus due to sensory and behavioral challenges. I drive him to and from Harman School daily. Extending the commute to a school more than 40–45 minutes away each direction would impose an impossible financial and emotional burden on our one-income household. Due to the nature of my son's disability, a classroom size of a smaller student body serves as the most positive impact for his abilities to receive an education. This also serves to directly violate his right to a free appropriate public education through 20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(1) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Policy 2419.

Additionally, there have been numerous occasions during past winters when Harman School closed or delayed due to unsafe roads while the rest of the county's schools remained open due to the vast differences in weather across the county and region. Expecting families to risk travel during those conditions or forgo education days altogether is unreasonable and

inequitable. While true that many families travel to the Elkins area for necessities, it is discriminatory to assume and expect that all families within the Harman, Dryfork, and Whitmer areas travel with their children during times of inclement weather and hazardous conditions.

#### **4. Lack of Financial Necessity and Fiscal Inefficiency**

It has been publicly stated that Randolph County had already met its budgetary requirements prior to the vote and that closing Harman School will ultimately cost the county more money than keeping it open. Consolidation under these circumstances does not advance fiscal responsibility or educational efficiency—it does the opposite, while simultaneously endangering children and significantly impacting the community.

#### **5. Operational and Logistical Concerns Demonstrating Systemic Transportation Failures**

The Randolph County Board of Education's own public communications show ongoing and unresolved transportation issues in existing consolidated zones. According to posts on the official Randolph County Schools Facebook page, including automated phone calls and text messages, bus routes in the Elkins area are frequently delayed or canceled. When this occurs, other buses must split or double their routes, resulting in extended ride times and late arrivals for students across multiple communities, or students not being able to attend school at all. Hindering their attendance records and educational capabilities.

If the county is already unable to maintain reliable transportation schedules for its current student population, adding the additional distance and demand created by closing Harman School will further strain the system. From the dates of 10/01/25 - 10/13/2025 more than 20 bus schedules have been alternated, cancelled, early, or delayed, and accommodations have had to be made. This clearly demonstrates further that the county is not equipped to

support safe or consistent transportation for students traveling from the Harman area.

## **6. Improper CEFP Amendment and Waiver Request**

Superintendent Dilly's recent request for approval of a waiver and amendments to the county's Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP) raises serious questions of compliance and transparency.

The original CEFP submitted and approved by the West Virginia Board of Education projected Harman School to remain open, while the receiving and surrounding schools were planned for future closure and consolidation into a single elementary facility within the town of Elkins. This newly approved amendment reverses that plan entirely, undermining both the long-term vision approved by the State Board and the legislative intent behind the CEFP process.

By seeking a waiver to exceed transportation limits and altering the CEFP to close a school that was previously identified as necessary for continued operation, the county board has exceeded its statutory authority and acted contrary to the established, state-approved educational facilities plan.

## **7. Legislative and Oversight Considerations**

Given these substantial concerns, I respectfully ask the West Virginia Board of Education to deny approval of Randolph County's closure and consolidation plan for Harman School under WV Code §18-5-13a and §18-2E-5d.

Furthermore, I request that LOCEA review this proposal to determine whether the county board and State Board are acting within the scope of their statutory authority and in conformity with legislative intent, particularly regarding student safety, accessibility, and transportation limits for the waiver and amendment request of Superintendent Dilly. Accordingly, I respectfully

request that this matter is reviewed for its potential overreach and noncompliance with WV Code §§18-5-13a and 18-2E-5d.

In closing, Harman School is not just a building—it is the only safe, accessible educational option for dozens of mountain families who already face geographic and financial hardship. Closing it would not only endanger our children but violate the principles of a “thorough and efficient system of free schools” guaranteed under Article XII of the West Virginia Constitution.

I deeply appreciate your attention to this matter and urge you to stand with our community in protecting the safety, accessibility, and educational equity of all Randolph County students.

Respectfully,

Rebecca L. Hanlin-Vance

Parent of Jensen Vance, Kindergarten

Harman School District, Randolph County

304-704-0524

[bexlynn76@gmail.com](mailto:bexlynn76@gmail.com)

Dear Superintendent Blatt, Last night the Randolph County Board of Education voted to close Harman K-12 school. They are planning on busing them to Elkins. There are three theaceous mountains between here and Harman. It is a very dangerous road in pretty weather. They say that they can get them here by bus in 31 minutes. That is impossible. Some of those kids will be on the bus way over an hour. Please, please. please do not give them a waiver. Trucks on that road jack knife all of the time. The roads are very slick and snow covered in the wintertime. Lots of times they have to close that road and there is only one way to Elkins.

They said they will save over a million dollars if they close Harman. One students' life is worth more than a million dollars. There are 93 students in that school and they will be in danger riding on a school bus. It is not the right thing to do. Please help the families in Harman. They said last night if they didn't get the waiver they couldn't close that school. I am praying that they don't get the waiver.

Thank you. Judy Kittle, Former Educator

The new US Department of Education has established its national goals.

1. The empowering of parents as the primary decision makers in their children's education
2. Promoting more autonomy for local communities.
3. Eliminating unnecessary Bureaucracy
- 4, Supporting the rightful role of the State Elected Authority .

This adds another nail into the future of closure and consolidation as a method to use to improve anything. The parents of the children in the target schools and the overall will of the communities are ignored. The Unelected Bureaucracy can issue a state of emergency to coerce compliance from any school board and tell the community if they still refuse to comply they can just fire the school board and take over. The heck with checks and balances.

Keep in mind again that the State Building Authority and School Board are judge by their Peers to be the 48th worst school System in America.

Here we are once again in West Virginia schools with another 25 rural community schools facing orders of closure and consolidation that we are told will improve our failing education programs, save the taxpayers money and fix the 6.3% loss of students across the state. We have to add to that, a suggestion that the School Board Administration simply has to improve the communication level for following State orders. Once again all of this manufactured drama, full of fire and brimstone signifying nothing positive for education, seems to only keep the continued failure of our West Virginia schools sealed in a concrete vault. It has become one big chaotic mess. Add to this.

The Governor's attempt to join 45 other states in insisting for parental rights is tied up in court by The State Board of Education. Even the new Governor refers to his inherited School Board as UNELECTED BUREAUCRATS. The Governor did get a court order to continue while the court figures it all out. Guess who is paying for all this? Lawyers ain't cheap.

The elected State legislature is also tied up in court by guess who? This to decide if our elected officials should have some say in the decisions, again by these same UNELECTED BUREAUCRATS.

So when 4 amazing elected School Board Members saw all this stuff going on and the new orders from the UNELECTED BUREAUCRATS to close and consolidate 5 of their rural schools they raised their hand and said No. The flack that they received will go down in history and rumors of coercion are flying all over the local communities. Coming on next email MONEY, Indoctrination demands, {Better known as Bullying} and more.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Martin Wach** <[martinwach43@gmail.com](mailto:martinwach43@gmail.com)>

Date: Wed, Oct 1, 2025 at 12:18 PM

Subject: A natural progression

To: <[philip.chua@k12.wv.us](mailto:philip.chua@k12.wv.us)>, <[sherri.collett@k12.wv.us](mailto:sherri.collett@k12.wv.us)>, <[charles.daniels@k12.wv.us](mailto:charles.daniels@k12.wv.us)>, <[janie.newlon@k12.wv.us](mailto:janie.newlon@k12.wv.us)>

This was sent to our friends at the County Board. Tomorrow you will be amazed at the weapons we have to take on what ever may happen. Cheer up it gets a lot better. Marty  
th3e Gardener

The New Harman Sovereign School Team spent most of its time building the plans for making Harman school into a sovereign school and are well on the way. We also watched the State Board Of Education"s more and more aggressive actions to the community and asked our Research Fellow to prepare for when they even reached the level of intimidation on Randolph County's Board members and particularly the demand closure of Harman School. Tomorrow we will let you know how we are preparing to fight and demand that this theory of using closure and consolidation has got to stop. It has never improved the state levels of education, apparently has not in any way helped pay for quality education, and worst of all tore apart our wonderful Appalachian small communities. The Harman Sovereign School Team will continue tomorrow.

The West Virginia School Building Authority and their partner the WV State School System are finding themselves on the wrong side of 21st century quality education for the State's Children. The West Virginia State Constitution demands quality education for their students and in 2024 the State Education Juggernaut was considered the 48th worst education program in America. They also find themselves deep in a battle with the State Governor over Parent Rights, the State Legislature over the right of the elected legislature to review their decisions, the majority of the citizens, One of their own county school boards, several rural school parent groups and a transformed rural education gem of a school, Harman School, the first West Virginia Sovereign School on its way to being the best darn school in the State.

So in their flawed approach to quality education at the same time all this was happening, the State Building Authority approved 25 rural schools for closure and consolidation adding to the already over 300 completed over 35 years. They paid particular attention the Harman school in their plans and when 4 of 5 Randolph County School Board Members said no to consolidation of Harman a whole pile of stuff hit the fan including a Juggernaut state of emergency smackdown on the County with indoctrination orders to re-educate, better communications and finally a closed and consolidated Harman School. So began the epic story of a small, amazing rural Appalachian School and a monumental Sovereign education team taking on a flawed Juggernaut for the future of education in West Virginia. We are attaching items that explain this natural progression.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** When the State Building Authority set in place the laws that were to govern their actions they may or may not have included as fixed law a very specific Economy of Scale set of guidelines that automatically made Rural West Virginia Schools targets for closure and consolidation.

Good evening,

Im writing to you as a concerned parent of two Randolph county school students. The current proposed plan to consolidate the elementary schools and 2 K-12 schools brings many safety concerns. Im here to voice my concerns about one in particular, and that is Coalton Elementary. This school has been part of my family forever. My dad graduated from Coalton when it was a K-12. Im an active volunteer and participate in all of the class activities possible. This school is so much more than just a school its a family and the heart of our community. Closing this school and sending our kids to third ward would mean crowded rooms, longer bus rides that are dangerous in the winter, and more classroom distractions due to the larger class sizes leading to a decline in the quality of education.

Throughout this consolidation plan I feel like transparency has not been provided and the numbers aren't adding up. Even with this current plan we will still not be making budget. I feel there could be better plans and options that could be explored that would not be jeopardizing our elementary schoolers education and safety. I would greatly appreciate if the state would look at this. I understand that budget needs to be met and consolidations need to happen to do that. However there are 4 elementary schools within 10 minutes of each other in Elkins. Our rural schools should be the last to close. I ask that you please take time to review this plan for the safety of our children.

**From:** Jennie Shifflett <willowfarmsdryfork@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 19, 2025 11:58 AM  
**To:** WVDE - Superintendent <superintendent@k12.wv.us>  
**Subject:** Randolph County Consolidation of schools

You don't often get email from [willowfarmsdryfork@gmail.com](mailto:willowfarmsdryfork@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

[EXTERNAL SENDER]: Do not click links, open attachments or reply to this email unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Ms. Blatt,

I am writing today as a stepmother and community member and a victim of consolidation in Pendleton county. And when I say victim, I mean victim. My family lived in Pendleton county when all the schools were rolled into Franklin as one school. Not only is it treacherous for them going over North Mountain but they're not able to participate in any school functions. It is like they were outcast and are bullied and made to feel that way.

Already in Randolph County, because of this consolidation plan, my stepson has always participated in 4-H county wide and other activities. This year at a camp and livestock fair, the other youth ignored him because their parents have told them that Harman is holding them back from getting an education because of all the lies and hatred that is being spread. And now you want our Harman children to attend school with them?

Another issue is the travel. I have driven those mountains for over thirty years. They are hazardous in a vehicle. I can not imagine seeing my child or other children in a bus with those big trucks stuck up. Sometimes I have to sit for hours to get across. Who is going to be liable for these children? Is the state of WV? When my child sits for hours or even gets into a wreck? It can be pretty when I live and when I get on middle mountain it will be blowing the snow down. The safety of our children is a very big concern here. I will not send our child out into an environment like this.

This has caused such hatred in our county that once was a safe and peaceful place to live. People do not want to move here and live. Our education system is torn apart. You are talking about consolidating and then building new schools. There is no money now so where is this money going to come from for new schools? Randolph County will be a ghost town and tourists will not even come to visit if we keep these activities up with an unstable educational system and poor stability in our county.

Harman has taken care of itself for years. We have paid for our school to stay open. While still sending our tax dollars elsewhere. I feel our community members will not continue to support public education any longer. There has to be something we can do. Our tax dollars

should not go to the state and we suffer without proper education and our children are on a bus for hours and in an unsafe environment.

There has to be a better plan. SAY NO to CONSOLIDATION.

Jennie Shifflett  
Harman, WV

Hi my name is Shasta. I am a resident of Randolph county and I am writing to you out of concern of what is happening to our county. Randolph county is the largest county in the state. We have a very widespread area that has a lot of rural areas that have very dangerous travel situations in the winter. We have of course the city of Elkins that holds multiple elementary schools, middle and high schools. Now for me to get to the elephant in the room Dilly's plan to consolidate in the way i'm guessing his AI program has informed him. The plan that has been introduced to you and your board is only one of many there are better ones that make more sense and not to mention saves more money but he will only consider his plan even though it is the worst plan. The way his plan works is going to put many lives in dangerous situations, cram children into made up classrooms, and make the deficit worse. To complete his plan he will have to hire more bus drivers, buy modulars, and still employ a lot of teachers but also will cause many people including me to pull our children from the school system the deficit will only grow in this plan I don't know what rose color glasses he's putting over this plan but it is downright reckless. Many have asked for transparency on how much did we have last year, how much this year, and what do we need for following years yet there have been no answers. When asked about safety plans and we get no answers. I know you are not present to understand what is actually happening but I pray you listen to the people of Randolph county we understand something has to be done but Dilly's plan is not the answer and threatening the board members who see it's not a good idea is just down right despicable they are trying to make the best decision they just haven't been given it yet he won't even propose them. I don't know what has happened that the entire state's public school system is in a down fall I know its not just our county but where is our governor we need action now.

Randolph County's superintendent is planning to close Harman School and send the students over three treacherous mountains to Elkins to attend school. They have 93 students and it is a K-12 school. They say that they don't have enough money to fund that school. They are going to end up getting in a bus wreck. The deer are horrible and lots of times they have to close that road because of ice and snow. It can be sprinkling warm rain in Elkins and a blizzard on those mountains. Believe me, I have driven over those mountains in the winter and I have prayed to get home safely.

Not only that, but those students are going to have to get up in the dark and start to school from Harman in order to get to Elkins by 7:10 a.m. Those poor elementary students are not going to be able to cope with that. It is going to be terrible for them.

Can you please do something to help those poor students?

Sincerely, Judy Kittle former Elkins High School Counselor

Randolph

Judy Romine Kittle ([jrkittle@suddenlink.net](mailto:jrkittle@suddenlink.net))

## Introduction

This is shaping up as a truly epic event and story and you are invited to be join us and be part of it

Come join the Harman Team and the students and community of the wonderful Harman WV small forest rural school in their fight against the WV School Building Authority and their partner the State Board of Education Juggernaut that wants to close the school forever and consolidate the students into another school miles away.

The Story began in December of 2024 when the news paper announced that the school was to be closed and consolidated and started to get really interesting when four local school board members just raised their hand and said “No” throwing a massive monkey wrench into the plans. Causing the juggernaut to smack a state of emergency on the school, local school board and whole community never really acknowledging that they might have been somewhat responsible themselves for the whole mess.

Please keep in mind as you review all the events that have so far taken place that for thirty five years and hundreds of school closures in 2024 the State Building Authority and State BoE were judged by their peers to be the 48th worst school system in America.

All of this chaos has pushed the School Board of Randolph County, WV right smack in the middle of how the whole country has to deal with all the issues facing education in the 21st century. Linda E. McMahon the new Superintendent of the US Dept. of Education opened her first speech by saying that Parents and community are to be the primary decision makers in their children’s education. She stressed the importance of meaningful learning of math, reading, science and history and the need to create a path to well paying careers. She also got a court decision to fire almost half of her employees, a cautionary tale for the State Building authority and State BoE.

For thirty five years the State Building Authority and their compliant partners have closed our wonderful Rural Schools, destroying communities and can produce no meaningful Tangible results so the new targets of their closure and consolidation suggest maybe it is time for them to consider a new job. Please review the attached files so that can understand how serious and important OCT. 8,2025 is and please come join us. This is when decisions will be made. Marty the gardener [martinwach43@gmail.com](mailto:martinwach43@gmail.com) for more information

## Creating a plan to Improve Education In West Virginia Future Ready Schools

In 2014 a small rural school in West Virginia was forced to close and students consolidated because of major ceiling problems. The community around Harman School immediately went to work and were not only able to raise enough for repairs but also participate in the repair work. Because of the wonderful success in these repairs they were able to bring their children back to the community school. In our research we have never seen such community involvement in a school. They had been able to remove the cause that the State School Board used to force consolidation and the BoE apparently had no choice but to accept the results. However in 2024 The State School Board came back with another order of closure and consolidation. This time with a bucket list of concerns and tried to get the County BoE to agree to closure. No one seemed to give much consideration to the community or school children again except for 4 of the 5 school board who exercising their community spirit said they would not approve the State Plan nor the wishes of the Director of the County Board.

By this action the Harman School School was given just enough time for the school principal to alert a wider community of professionals including Generational Businesses, Research Fellows, and education experts in Future Ready Schools. The goal was to return immediately programs such as Art, Creative Writing, music, Home Economics, Vocational Agriculture, Workforce technology and More. This was done in a few weeks at no cost to the school system and at level that defies belief. The next goal was to address all the requirements for a Future Ready School incorporating student lead projects, advanced technology, developing solutions, critical thinking, personalized learning pathways. and a lot more. Finally of primary concern is finance that the business community has incorporated into the system to have not only the ability for most projects to pay for

themselves and teachers but add to the finances of the local BoE which seem to be in a little trouble.

This Harman Team under the direction of the principal has created a first Sovereign School in West Virginia ready for the adventures of the children on August 15 and to interrupt this will cause quite a few issues of interest for anyone daring to do so. Especially if they have no tangible evidence of improving anything.

The Harman Sovereign School Has already been operating for a few months and has a record of success. On the evening of August 14, 2025 the entire program will be available to the World.

February 2, 2025 — — — The Monumental Legend of the Communities of Harman and Pickens West Virginia fighting to save their schools.

The insanity begins

In 1983 President Ronald Reagan wrote in "A Nation at Risk" "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performances that exists today we might view it as an act of war,"

In 1989 The School Building Authority of West Virginia was created to provide funding and oversight for construction and maintenance of school facilities, Also to improve the learning environment for students and teachers. The Authority would pay particular attention to the educational needs of communities in West Virginia by assisting County Boards of Education and overseeing construction programs.

Just a year later legislation was passed that would assist the Authority in their efforts by allowing for CONSOLIDATION of schools in communities where both the State and County School Boards felt that they could no longer provide quality education to their students.

So, since the Building Authority was in charge of new construction and maintenance expenses, for all intents and purposes they were now in charge of Education in West Virginia. The School Building Authority of West Virginia and their State and County partners have been very busy with some maintenance, a lot of building and closing already an awful lot of Community schools. Harman and Pickens are just on the new list. Of 25 closings.

Millions of dollars have been spent to build new schools or add facilities to schools to accommodate consolidation and the cost of transporting the students of closed community schools has risen over these years to almost one tenth of the total school budget in West Virginia. Communities continue to be torn apart, Communities that they claim to be helping to achieve the other goals of improving the learning environment and actually helping the educational needs of communities.

AND YET, IN 2024 OUR WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOLS WERE RANKED THE 48TH WORST SCHOOLS IN THE USA AND HAVE BOUNCED BACK AND FORTH TO 50TH WORST SINCE. WHATEVER SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN IN CHARGE OF OUR CHILDREN HAS A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO. Consolidation has failed miserably and yet it continues. Continuing down this path thinking that things will get better meets the definition of insanity.

A Cautionary Tale

What happened to West Virginia's Circleville School in 2002? The whole community fought consolidation every step of the way. They even went to the West Virginia Supreme Court to argue their position. Robert M. Bastress, a WVU Professor, argued "The whole thing is rigged to coerce consolidation." The community has never really recovered because taking a school, the heart and soul of a community, is the worse thing that can happen to our beautiful state. Perhaps if an unfriendly system decides to continue to attempt to impose on a local community a proven failed plan, it really could be viewed as an act of war on community values and quality education.

We will continue to find out more about this system based on the idea of consolation to improve education while at the same time having no success in giving West Virginia better test scores.

Part 2 July 29,2025

“ Listed in the responsibilities of elected School Board Members is that they have become the community’s voice for local needs. Certainly not the perceived needs of outside players. “

In December of 2024 the local news carried the story of the intention to close Harman School and consolidate the student body to larger schools in the Community, even though it was reported that the Harmon Community and many others in the region came together to appose the action by the State Building Authority and State BoE. Based on the past history of such closures and consolidations many felt that their local Randolph County School Board and Director would rubber stamp everything. At the critical next meeting two months later 4 brave local school board members voted NO. Only one board member went along with the plan. The fact that these 4 individuals raised their hand to stop the plan shocked everyone. They actually were however, exercising their responsibilities to become the voice of their communities. Of course this tossed a monumental wrench into the State juggernaut. They became immediately community legends. They actually stood up and defended the voters of their community. This was followed by pressure to change their vote and when that didn’t work the State BoE and State Building Authority slapped the community BoE with a state of emergency which would not be lifted till they submitted to basically “Re Education and Training about their mistake, the

Superintendent to improve his communication skills, assigning a mentor to reinforce what needed to be done, reporting to them, fixing their financial situation and of course, handing Harman School over to the chopping block.

Talk about over kill! Two unelected school authorities demanding from local elected authorities that they forget their responsibilities to their community. By the way The WV State BoE and their partner are currently involved in Litigation over these matters. We will continue to hope that our 4 heroes who stood up to them stay strong and remember the state supervises the 48th worst system in America and has no tangible success.

Keep in mind that while all of this drama has been going on just maybe Harman School has taken advantage of the freedom to develop something that will change education in our wonderful state forever. Our children will never be treated like this again. Stay tuned.

Extra, Extra, Read all About It

Giant West Virginia Hellbender

Salamanders are slithering all around the Albart Abia Maroon Indian rainforest school in the community of Kaya Paat in Suriname S.A. 20 FT Anacondas are showing up in the hallways of Harman School, a small West Virginia school surrounded by the great Monongahela National Forest. it seems as if the World has been turned upside down by a Maroon Indian woman chief and school teacher, an amazing 5th grade teacher and her Principal, and a family of local authors, artists, and adventurers.

All this chaos started when Harman School was notified that their gem of a school was to be closed and consolidated into another school miles away from the Harman Community. The community immediately reacted in the support of their school and children, and were able to

convince the local school Board to give them some time to plan a program to avoid closure. Their school was the heart and soul of the Town so everyone began to act quickly. The students and teachers set in motion a plan to not just be an average school but rather the best darn school in the state of West Virginia.

The Principal received a recommendation to consult with popular Children's book Authors, commercial artists, and adventurers who were located at their working gallery and garden in a nearby community. Martin and Delia Wach had already produced 10 published books five of which were co-authored with elementary school children. Over 100 West Virginia students became published authors and State Treasures. No one in the book publishing world had done anything like this.

Martin and Delia Wach were introduced to Mrs. Patty Teter and her 5th grade class. They immediately liked the idea of a book project to show off the school and their ability to write a book. Martin had also brought along their third book about their rainforest adventures in Suriname with a Maroon Indian medicine man and his family "The Great West Virginia Snow Adventure". It was about three teddy bears in a little Maroon School who want to come to West Virginia to see snow. The Maroon teacher in the story was Silva named after the school teacher wife of the medicine man Martin traveled the rainforest with. Delia and Silva were still best friends and Silva had become the first and only woman chief of the Maroon Saramaka Tribe. Delia had let Silva know about the book project at Harman and Silva proposed that her school children work with Harman's children together on this book and they would

compare life in their rainforest life with life in the Great Monongahela Forest. In less than two weeks Harman school forged a monumental International cooperative project. The great Suriname National Forest is also a Unesco World Heritage Site. The United Nations has been informed of this project also Suriname's Embassy and US Embassy in Suriname. Hellbender and Anaconda Uniforms ordered and the presses are ready to print their book. The first step to be the best and most exciting school in West Virginia is started and the other students at Harman are not going to let the 5th grade get all the glory.

The younger students are bringing attention to the three bird groups that need to be protected and numbers increased. The Peregrine Falcon, Bob White, and Golden Warbler. They will be working with famous bird artist Holly Wach ["hollywach.com"](http://hollywach.com) one of Googles 15 best

artist in the World and Famous local Falconer Collin Waybright and the 5th grade will help them get pictures of Suriname's popular Birds.

Marsha Waybright's owner of nearby WV School of Traditional Skills will be having discussions with Harman school to bring back home economic projects that were lost recently.

The science students are ordering and building a state of the art Plant Tissue Culture Laboratory that can take one seed and produce a hundred cloned plants for 21st century horticulture and agriculture. Very soon exotic tropical plants, rare flowers and even Ginseng.

Bids are being put together to repair the School Career and Technical facility and Harman School will offer CNC and 3D manufacturing training. We are preparing some very lucky students to excel in Quantum and Ai training. All of these things

and more will be a model of what a small West Virginia Rural school can have at almost no cost and be basically self sustaining.

Come talk to us and let us show you how to make learning an adventure again.

It will be very hard to justify shutting down a school that is showing how quickly it can replace monumental education opportunities that were taken away by a school system that has not improved in three decades.

This monumental story has just begun and come with us on a great adventure.



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## Randolph County Schools



Sep 28 · 

Bus Changes for Monday, 9/29/25 -  
Kevin Bell's Bus 56 will not run on Monday.  
Please remember to submit a note stating this reason if your child cannot attend school.

 3

8 shares

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## Randolph County Schools



Sep 25 · 

Bus Changes for Friday 9/26/25:

1. Glory's Bus 86 will not run on Friday.

 3

13 shares

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# Randolph County Schools



Sep 24 · 🌐

## Bus Information for Thursday, 9/25/25: UPDATED

1. Kevin Bell's Bus 56 will not run on Thursday.

If your child cannot attend due to Failure of Bus to Run, please turn in a note stating the reason.

2. EHS and EMS students that ride bus 66 (Dakota) will be picked up 20 minutes early. EHS and EMS students that ride bus 48 (Mary) will be picked up 20 minutes late this morning. Dakota is picking up both routes. He plans to arrive at EHS on time.



5 shares





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### Randolph County Schools



2h 

Bus Update for Tuesday afternoon:  
GWES/TVMHS -

Joey's Bus 73 will run 20 minutes early this afternoon. Travis's Bus 53 will run 20 minutes late.



Bus 73 early departure schedule

Bus route



2

3 shares



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### Randolph County Schools



17h 

Bus Information for Tuesday 10/14. UPDATED

Bus 78 will run on the Alternate Schedule on Tuesday.

Bus 89 (GWES & TVMHS) will not run on Tuesday.

Travis's Bus 53 GWES & TVMHS will run Tuesday morning but will not run in the afternoon.





# Randolph County Schools



4d · 

Bus Updates for Friday, 10/10/25 - UPDATED  
Bus 56 will not run on Friday (Midland, EMS, EHS)

Bus 89 will not run on Friday (GWES, TVMHS)

BUS 66 EMS & EHS students will be picked up 25 minutes early this morning. Bus 66 will also pick up Bus 48 students and will run approximately 20 minutes late.

Bus 48 Beverly Elementary students will be picked up by Bus 85 and may be 5-10 minutes late.



3

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### Randolph County Schools



5d 

Updated Bus Information for Thursday 10/9/25:

Joey's Bus 73 will run approximately 20 minutes early this afternoon.

Jesse's Bus 55 students could run up to 10 minutes late.

(GWES, TVMHS)

 3

5 shares

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### Randolph County Schools



5d 

JRES, EMS, EHS - Bus 79 will not complete the Glady area portion of the bus run this morning. The route will be on normal schedule this afternoon.

 3

2 shares

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### Randolph County Schools





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### Randolph County Schools



5d · 

GWES/TVMHS Bus Information for Thursday, 10/9/25 - UPDATED

Bus 89 will not run 10/9/25.

Jessie's Bus 55 will not run 10/9.

 2

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### Randolph County Schools



5d · 

Bus 78 will run on the Alternate Plan on Thursday, 10/9/2025. (Coalton, EMS, EHS)

 3

4 shares

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**Randolph County Schools**6d · **Bus Change Update 10/8/25**

Joey's Bus 73 will run approximately 20 minutes early this afternoon.

Jesse's Bus 55 could run up to 10 minutes late.  
(GWES, TVMHS)

Thank you



4

8 shares



Like



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**Randolph County Schools**6d · **Bus Information for Wednesday, 10/8 -  
UPDATED**

Jimmy V's Bus 89 will not run on Wednesday  
(GWES, TVMHS)

See separate post regarding Bus 78 and its  
alternate plan.

Nick Corrick's Bus 59 will not run on  
Wednesday (JRES, EMS, EHS)



3

5 shares



Soon to be the greatest story ever told. The Maroon Indian children protectors off the great Suriname World Heritage Rainforest also known as the HELLBENDERS and the Harman children Of the mighty Appalachian Monongahela National forest known asThe ANACONDAS have joined together to fight injustices that are affecting both schools and their communities Their first project started in Dec. 2024 was to join in writing letters and post cards back and forth comparing their forests. Gifts and letters have been exchanged. They even will receive their new t-shirts shortly.A children's book will include their stories.

Note 1. We are attaching information that was prepared to announce these events

Every thing was going great and the Saramaka Woman chief Silva was excited about this project . Nothing even close had ever happened like this before and the dreams of their children grew like wildfire. They were making friends and sharing information with American children. So too the children in Mrs. Teter's 5th grade just couldn't imagine before this that a letter ,postcard or gift could come from their new friends on the Suriname River. That is when the Maroons became Helbenders and the Harman kids became Anacondas. Little did anyone expect that a film company asked if the could document the story. Even more than that the other 5 tribes of maroons caught wind of what was going on and reached out to Chief Silva to find out if there were more schools in West Virginia that would work with their children. In just 4 months these children did what no one had ever done before. They brought all the tribes together to improve the education of all their children. In West Virginia local businesses lined up to support their project.

So much excitement was created that everyone put off mentioning looming disasters that were possible Suriname was the only country in SA that did not give Land Rights to Their indigenous citizens. Just a year ago a group of farmers tried to purchase 1.3 million acres to farm, all of it in Maroon Territory . This group Had a terrible reputation of destroying forest land all through SA.In an article an author even said that when this group arrived Hell came with them. It was amazing that for the first time since 1975 when Suriname got its independence from Holland a recently Educated Maroon Lawyer was able to temporarily stop the project however they are back again and the Maroon school called to ask for advice. Just about the same time In DEC.2024 Harman School was notified that their local School Board under orders from the state school board had determined that Harman's community school was to be closed and consolidate into another school miles away. One can say when the West Virginia State School Board arrives Hell is not far away'Although the county school board surprised everyone by not following orders from the State just a few days ago the State set up a possible date to close the school. Just like their Maroon friends a community school was to be removed from the community and a school, the heart and soul of a community would have to comply. This is ordered by a State school system that in three decades did the same to over 300 schools promising improved education for communities that they said they really cared about in their literature and promises, In 2024 after all the harm that was done West Virginia was listed nationally as the 48th worst school system in America. It is expected that in a week or so A state of emergency for not accepting the state plans will be issued and Harman school will be lost forever. Rather than that, it has been suggested that a state of emergency should be issued to the West Virginia BoE for there decades of failing to properly educate our children and not showing tangible success.

The Maroons and Amerindians are beginning to believe that American children working together with their children will add to their chances of finally getting their rights as real citizens and Harman school has a real chance to be the best darn school in West Virginia.

Support Material and other data included

West Virginia Board of Education  
Attention Micah Whitlow  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East  
Charleston, WV 25305

Concerning the closure of Harman School, I am very dissatisfied with the Randolph County Board of Education, and the decision they made, based on the fact that some of the superintendent's statements are not factual.

First of all, the bus run numbers he submitted needs to be reviewed. There is no way that a bus from Alpena, WV to Elkins Middle School will be 10 minutes. You will be lucky at 40 minutes on a good day.

Dr. Dilly states that Harman needs structural work but that's not correct. In 2014, the school was revamped and paid for by grants, the state board of education, and Harman Alumni fundraisers, in three phases.

In Phase 3, the school received new HVAC units, ceiling lights, dry wall, floors, ceilings, roof, roof gutters, fascia and electrical. The bathrooms were also redone, and new fire alarms, door locks, playground equipment, and radio systems were installed. This is one of the best schools, structurally, in the county.

There are approximately 100 students. The numbers are down because of management. They have cut so much from these students, such as pre-k, art, music, agriculture, half time business, and math courses are now virtual. Cutting our pre-k program in 2022 reduced the number of students attending because these were our future students.

Let's go to balancing a budget. He states they do not have funding and then the day before the Harman School closure vote, the Inter-Mountain newspaper reported that they had balanced the budget. So, Pickens and Coalton Schools would not be closed, but Harman would. Dr. Dilly said they found funding for them so when we asked where the money came from, he informed us that he was not going to disclose it. This is public information, and we want to know. Dr. Dilly has way too many people working in the board office. Check out their qualifications and what they do. Check how many paychecks are being paid in that office.

The Inter-Mountain had an article on the front page that the board members had been threatened that they would be fined and go to jail if they didn't make the right decision on their vote to close Harman School (copy attached).

Mr. Dilly stated in the Inter-Mountain that he was going to purchase modulars and put kids in classrooms. How is that going to work because in 2015, Harman had two modulars for band, health, and speech and the fire marshal would not approve them. The community funded the money to tear them down, paid Sunrise Sanitation around \$4,800. If they would not pass in 2015 in Harman, how would that work in 2026 in Elkins?

We the community and very concerned parents want this school to stay open for the safety of our children. We are asking you to make a visit here, not at the board office, and figure out how to keep this school open.

As for bus routes, they want parents who live on back hollow roads to bring their kids out to bus stop locations that Dr. Dilly designated to pick the kids up. That is not right either. On November 10, the Vo-Tech bus that goes to Elkins could not get the kids

returned on time that day and ended up setting on Rich Mountain because the roads were blocked from the snowstorm and ice on the mountains. Mack trucks were ditched and sideways on the highway and the road was totally blocked.

We have talked with House of Delegate Robbie Morris, and he has presented legislation to fund money for Harman School to stay open. The session doesn't start for this until February 2026.

We are not trying to disgrace anyone's accountability, but we feel that this school was targeted. There have been false statements presented to board members and the finances of the Randolph County Board of Education needs to be investigated. We voted for the Board of Education members to lead, represent, and put the children first. If you have a heart, conscious, mind, and soul, you know the right thing for this school is to keep it open before stupid steps in and causes somebody to get severely injured on a bus run that should have never happened.

L.M. Teter  
Coordinator of Harman Alumni Building  
Advocate for Harman School  
PO Box 131  
Harman, WV 26270  
304-621-5687

Hello Micah,

I received your email address from a fellow concerned citizen.

I am writing as a concerned parent regarding the Randolph County Board of Education's decision to close Harman School. I have two children who attend that school: a seventh-grader and fourth-grader. We live less than 1 mile away from Harman School, and the proposed closure would require my children to attend schools in Elkins.

I understand nearly every county in West Virginia is facing declining enrollment, and with that, increased budget pressures. Every proposed school closure brings major changes to the students and communities affected; however, Harman sits in a unique geographic location, in some of West Virginia's highest mountains along the eastern edge of its largest county.

My deepest concerns are the drastically increased one-way travel times for students and the potential dangers posed by the four mountains between Harman and Elkins.

According to the proposed new bus routes provided by the current Randolph County superintendent of schools, Dr. Dilly, my children would need to be picked up from my driveway at 5:26 a.m. in order to be transported to Elkins. I currently leave my house at 7:20 a.m. and arrive at the school to drop my children off by 7:25 a.m. This proposed closure would significantly disrupt the quality of life of my children and many others at the school. I don't know of any parent in West Virginia who would be OK with their children being required to leave for school two hours earlier than their current schedule.

I also have serious concerns about Dr. Dilly's unprofessional and dismissive behavior to parents, community members and Harman School staff in recent months. He has repeatedly ignored our questions, particularly about his inaccurate proposed one-way bus route times that are frankly impossible in a car, much less on a bus making multiple stops. He also has failed to make corrections to the Impact Statement to fix both typos and factual errors in several areas, including staff qualifications and facts about building maintenance. It is my understanding that he provided the uncorrected and inaccurate Impact Statement to the State Board of Education earlier this month, according to questions posed during a regular board meeting on Nov. 18 by Randolph County BOE member Ed Daniels.

Dilly's proposed bus routes would require several families to bring their children out to the main highway in order to keep the one-way travel times under 60 minutes for elementary and middle school students. However, even if it were possible for those affected families to make it out to the pick-up and drop-off points on time each school day, the travel times for the bus routes are not accurate. Buses need to travel slowly and make multiple stops, which would take at least 20 minutes longer than what Dilly's proposed routes show.

Also, up to 13 current Harman students have been left off his proposed routes, making the actual times even longer. Dilly has been presented with accurate bus stop information for the students he omitted at least twice by concerned citizens, yet he has failed to update his proposals and said during the Nov. 18 meeting that community members simply don't understand his plans. He refuses to admit that his proposed routes and the Impact Statement are filled with errors.

Another huge concern for myself and other parents/guardians is the fact that several miles of the trip have zero cell phone coverage and extremely limited service for bus radios. My children's bus driver encountered a large limb in the road earlier this year, in an area of her route that has no cell service. She tried to use her radio to contact the main bus garage to

let them know, and they could not hear her. What happens if/when there is a serious emergency?

The mountains between Harman and Elkins often experience several more inches of snow than anywhere else in West Virginia, other than Snowshoe Mountain Resort and Canaan Valley. Just this past Monday, on Nov. 10, the mountains between Harman and Elkins were covered with snow and ice, causing traffic accidents beginning around 2:30 p.m. Students in Randolph County had a regular school day, despite the weather forecast and the fact that several other counties had delays or cancellations because of poor road conditions.

My husband saw three wrecks on the first mountain coming out of Elkins and heading home from work. If my children had been on a bus leaving from Elkins that afternoon, they could have been stuck for several hours with no cell service. Dr. Dilly has repeatedly failed to answer questions from concerned parents about this very scenario.

He also has failed to publicly answer questions about the budget and how suddenly new money apparently arrived in time to keep other rural Randolph County schools open. I am happy for those other rural schools, but question why there seems to be no room in the budget for Harman students.

I understand that members of the West Virginia Board of Education will review the proposed closure of Harman School and will be asked to grant waivers for transportation times. I am respectfully asking them to carefully consider the transportation concerns, gather accurate information for themselves and ultimately decide to keep Harman School open.

The closure of Harman School and the resulting dangerous and lengthy travel times for students would be devastating for my family and our community. Children will suffer with these extreme one-way travel times.

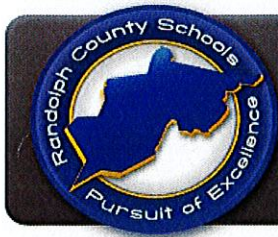
Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Beth Henry-Vance

[bethann141@hotmail.com](mailto:bethann141@hotmail.com)

PO Box 293

Harman WV 26270



# Randolph County Schools

"Purpose, Pride, and Perspective"

40 ELEVENTH STREET, ELKINS, WV 26241  
Telephone (304) 636-9150 Fax (304) 636-9157

A delegation or an individual may make comments to the Board; however, the Board cannot deliberate or take action on any item that is not on the meeting agenda, except in emergency situations. The Board may ask only clarifying questions of the delegation or individual.

## HARMAN PUBLIC HEARING

October 8, 2025

Delegation/Public Comment Sign-in Sheet

**FILE COPY**

Name	Phone Number	Email Address	Topic
<del>Keith Matthews</del>			
Quincy Murray			
Sammy Roy	304-216-2674	SJROY18@FrontierNet.net	School Closing
Beth Henry-Vance		bethann141@hotmail.com	School Closings
Rex Vance			Harman
Shasta Arbogast			School Closing
Jacey Muttresses			Harman
Jessica Pennington			Harman
Mike Ross			Harman
John Kelley			Harman
MaryLynn Kelly			Harman
Justin Murray			Harman
Dana Varner			HARMAN
Presley Pennington			Harman
Talitha Bucher			Harman
Trish Bucher			Harman











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Telephone (304) 636-9150 Fax (304) 636-9157

November 6, 2025

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

Dear Superintendent Blatt:

I am writing this letter to provide a summary of public comments for your kind review.

## Summary of Public Comments — Proposed Closure of Harman K-12 School

- **Transportation Concerns**
  - Travel times to receiving schools are far longer than stated, up to 1.5 hours each way.
  - Mountain roads are narrow, winding, and dangerous—especially in winter.
  - Full-size buses reportedly cannot navigate certain routes safely.
  - Safety fears expressed about bus accidents, limited phone service, and emergency response delays.
  - Questions raised about detailed emergency plans, sheltering, communication, and medication access for students during travel disruptions.
- **Student Safety & Well-Being**
  - Repeated emphasis that long bus rides put children's physical and emotional safety at risk.
  - Concern that the decision could lead to accidents or injuries; "no child's life is worth the risk."
  - Some suggested the board would bear moral responsibility if an accident occurred after consolidation.
- **Special Education & Individual Needs**
  - Parents of students with disabilities (e.g., autism, sensory processing disorders) said closure would cause regression and behavioral harm.
  - Some children cannot tolerate long travel times or the bus environment.
  - Staff at Harman were praised for their individual care and success with special-needs students.
- **Community & Emotional Impact**
  - Fear that closing the school will devastate the Harman and Whitmer communities, turning them into "ghost towns."
  - Harman School seen as a community hub; closure would damage local identity and morale.
  - Mention that residents have personally raised funds (\$225K+) for school improvements, demonstrating strong community investment.
- **Academic Performance & Improvement**
  - Harman's attendance rate (95.47%) is above county and state averages.

- Students have shown academic growth in math and reading (Math: 6%→44% at grade level; ELA: 10%→39%).
- Speakers argued the school is performing well and meeting goals previously set by the leadership team.
- **Extracurricular & Student Opportunities**
  - Concern that students will lose access to sports, clubs, and after-school activities due to travel distance.
  - Families may lack transportation for evening events at other schools, limiting student participation.
- **Financial & Budget Questions**
  - Several questioned whether the projected savings from closure are accurate or significant.
  - Building costs may persist (utilities, maintenance), and staff seniority rules reduce savings.
  - Fears that enrollment loss (families withdrawing or homeschooling) will offset any financial benefit.
  - Requests for transparent financial breakdowns showing real long-term savings versus costs.
- **Alternative Solutions Proposed**
  - Calls to table the vote and hold further community meetings before making a decision.
  - Suggestions to explore virtual or proximity learning options using Harman’s existing facility.
  - Proposals to consider in-town consolidations first rather than closing remote schools.
  - Requests for brainstorming sessions involving community members, board, and legislators.
- **Legal and Policy Questions**
  - References to WV Code 18-2E-5(d) and whether the board can legally vote to close without legislative change.
  - Objections to using “waivers” to bypass travel-time limits for students.
  - Calls for legislative or state-level involvement before proceeding.
- **Governance and Representation**
  - Concerning that decisions are being made without adequate state or legislative support.
  - Mention that elected officials should advocate for rural schools facing consolidation pressures.
  - Frustration that community questions often go unanswered by leadership.
- **Moral & Ethical Appeals**
  - Multiple speakers emphasized that children, not budgets should guide the decision.
  - Some warned of long-term consequences for mental health, family stability, and community vitality.
  - Pleas to “protect the children” and prioritize their safety, opportunity, and well-being.

### **Summary of Public Comments — Proposed Closure of North Elementary School**

- **Academic Performance and Accountability**
  - Declining academic outcomes were identified as a major reason families are leaving public schools for homeschooling or Hope Scholarships.
  - Concerns raised that many teachers are not consistently teaching grade-level content, leading to weaker academic results.
  - Lack of accountability cited among both staff and administration, resulting in lowered expectations and morale.

- Speakers emphasized the need for stronger enforcement of professional standards, conduct codes, and instructional rigor.
- **Classroom Environment and Student Behavior**
  - Unaddressed disruptive and violent behaviors, even among young students, are negatively affecting learning environments.
  - Lack of consequences for poor behavior reportedly encourages more misbehavior.
  - Teachers are facing increasing demands beyond instruction, including managing behavioral, emotional, and social issues.
- **Workforce and Staffing Challenges**
  - Chronic staffing shortages and unfilled vacancies create strain on existing staff and reduce instructional quality.
  - Teachers frequently cover multiple classes or lose planning periods due to lack of substitutes.
  - Low morale and high stress levels make recruiting and retaining qualified staff difficult.
  - Very few student teachers are completing residencies in the county, and most do not plan to remain in West Virginia.
- **Systemic and Legislative Issues**
  - State-mandated standards and scripted curricula are viewed as developmentally inappropriate, particularly for younger grades.
  - Excessive testing and screen-based learning requirements contradict child development research and teacher training.
  - Legislators' limited classroom experience was cited as contributing to unrealistic educational expectations.
- **Broader Role of Schools**
  - Public schools are increasingly expected to meet not just academic but also physical, emotional, and social needs—overstretching staff and resources.
  - Speakers suggested narrowing focus to core academics to improve outcomes and efficiency.
- **Community and Personal Ties**
  - Strong sentimental and historical attachment to North Elementary noted by teachers, families, and alumni.
  - Despite emotional ties, some speakers acknowledged that the financial and staffing realities make consolidation necessary.
  - Recognition that new community bonds can be built at receiving schools if transitions are handled with care.
- **Financial Stewardship and Consolidation Support**
  - Arguments presented that continuing to fund multiple under-enrolled schools divert resources from students.
  - Consolidation viewed as a means to fully staff schools, restore programs such as art and library sciences, and improve educational quality.
  - Emphasis placed on focusing limited resources on student outcomes rather than maintaining multiple buildings.
- **Timing and Urgency of the Decision**
  - Board reminded of a limited “window of time” in which a closure decision must be made for budget and state compliance reasons.
  - Speakers cautioned that if the board delays or fails to act within that timeframe, it cannot easily revisit the decision later.
  - Reassurance offered that if financial conditions improve, the board could rescind the closure decision in the future.
- **One-Time State Funding Warning**
  - The additional state allocation granted for rural and remote schools this year is not

guaranteed to continue.

- Speakers warned against relying on this temporary funding when planning long-term budgets.
- **Overall Message**
  - While acknowledging the emotional difficulty of closing a long-standing school, speakers emphasized fiscal responsibility and the need to adapt to declining enrollment and limited resources.
  - The consistent theme: focus on educating students effectively, not preserving buildings, and take timely action to strengthen the school system for the future.

## **Summary of Public Comments — Jennings Randolph Elementary (Receiving School)**

### **Transportation and Travel Time Concerns**

- Major discrepancies are noted between the Impact Statement narrative and data tables for estimated student travel times.
- Actual bus route times expected to be significantly longer than the report indicates, with some students boarding as early as 5:47 a.m. and riding over 1 hour and 20 minutes one way.
- These times would exceed limits allowed under WV Code 18-2E-5A, meaning all Harman routes would require waivers.
- Concerns raised about limited or no cell service on long stretches of the route, creating safety and communication risks during emergencies.
- Questioned whether the district has considered inclement weather, detours, and the lack of official agreements with Tucker County schools referenced in the document.

### **Accuracy and Reliability of Data**

- The Impact Statement cited as containing errors and inconsistencies, especially in transportation times and distances.
- Speakers warned that inaccurate data cannot legally support a closure decision under WV Code 18-5-13, which requires factual information for board justification.
- Requested that the Board recheck all figures before taking action.

### **Virtual Learning and Harman Facility Use**

- Section noting a potential “virtual learning hub” in Harman was criticized as vague and undeveloped.
- Community members asked whether this is an actual plan or just a concept.
- Unanswered questions included:
  - Would parents have a choice to enroll children in virtual learning locally?
  - Would students be bused to a hub?
  - Would the hub require new staff or a paid facilitator?
  - Would maintaining such a facility negate any savings from the closure?
- Calls for clear, detailed plans before including such proposals in official documents.

### **Financial Impact and Cost Analysis**

- LSIC analysis presented showing that closing Harman could result in a net loss, not savings.
- Estimated annual cost to operate Harman: ~\$1.6 million.
- After adjusting for realistic factors (personnel shifts, transportation increases, loss of \$100K from Senate Bill 300), closure could cost ~\$41,700 more than keeping the school open.
- Claimed savings in utilities, maintenance, and “other” costs would be nonexistent, since the district would still bear expenses for those categories.
- Argued that closure is not fiscally responsible given these calculations.

### **Transportation Safety and Experience**

- A veteran bus driver with 30 years of experience addressed concerns, stating that while accidents and ditch incidents have occurred, no serious student injuries have happened in his tenure.
- Emphasized the training and professionalism of Randolph County drivers and expressed confidence in safely transporting North and Harman students if consolidation proceeds.

### **Readiness and Culture at Jennings Randolph Elementary**

- A staff member at JRES spoke spontaneously, highlighting the school's welcoming environment.
- Noted that JRES has previously hosted Harman students temporarily and did so successfully.
- Reassured families that the staff are caring, experienced, and ready to support new students if closures occur.
- Stressed that JRES is a "showcase school" focused on student well-being and inclusion.

### **Student Perspective**

- A Harman student made a short, heartfelt appeal to keep the school open, citing pride in recent academic progress and concern about long travel times.
- Expressed that closing Harman would harm student morale and community connection.

## **Summary of Public Comments — Elkins Middle School (Receiving School for Harman K-12 Students)**

### **Community Appeal for Delay and Collaboration**

- Speakers urged the Board to pause or delay any final decisions regarding the proposed school closures, emphasizing that more time is needed for accurate analysis and community collaboration.
- It was noted that Randolph County's budget is now balanced, with a 3% surplus, countering the original justification for an urgent closure vote.
- Community members argued that this improved fiscal position removes the need for immediate consolidation.
- The public requested that the Board engage with community leaders and attend proposed meetings designed to explore alternative solutions to financial and enrollment challenges.
- Calls were made to work with legislators and other stakeholders to identify policy or funding adjustments that could prevent closures.

### **Accuracy and Transparency of Information**

- Concern persisted over inaccuracies within the official impact statement, including transportation data and cost projections.
- Speakers cautioned against making decisions based on incorrect or incomplete figures, arguing that such actions could be premature and potentially invalid.
- Repeated requests were made for the Board to revisit and verify all data before proceeding to a vote.

### **Statewide Context and Legislative Engagement**

- It was emphasized that declining enrollment is not unique to Randolph County but a statewide and national trend, warranting systemic policy discussion rather than local reaction.
- Several community members offered to advocate directly with state legislators to seek funding flexibility and explore solutions tailored to rural schools like Harman.

## **Summary of Public Comments — Elkins High School (Receiving School for Harman K-12 Students)**

### **Welcoming Environment and Staff Readiness**

- Elkins High School staff affirmed that the school is fully prepared to welcome Harman students with care and inclusivity.
- Teachers emphasized that EHS is a supportive, student-centered community, dedicated to ensuring a smooth and positive transition for all incoming students.
- The focus, they said, will be on making new students feel valued and included and ensuring equal access to academic and extracurricular opportunities.
- Staff expressed enthusiasm about integrating Harman students into the “Elkins High family,” highlighting the school’s tradition of teamwork and school pride.

### **Community and Transition Support**

- Speakers acknowledged that change is difficult, particularly for small, close-knit communities like Harman.
- The emphasis was placed on unity and collaboration, with community members calling for a district-wide effort to help students adjust both academically and emotionally.
- Suggestions included proactive planning, orientation programs, and strong communication between Harman families and Elkins High administration.
- The broader message was one of inclusion and shared responsibility, encouraging staff, parents, and community members to work together to make the merger successful if it proceeds.

### **Academic and Opportunity Perspective**

- Speakers noted that Elkins High offers a wide range of academic programs and extracurricular options, such as career-technical courses, advanced classes, and athletics, which can expand opportunities for Harman students.
- They urged that all students, regardless of their original school, receive equal access to these programs and resources once they are integrated.

If you need any further information, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Dr. Shawn Dilly  
Superintendent  
Randolph County Schools

**Special Board Meeting to Conduct Public Hearings on Proposed Harman K-12 School and North Elementary School Closure and receiving schools of Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School - Elkins High School (Wednesday, October 8, 2025)**

*Generated by Jessica Isner on Monday, October 13, 2025*

**Members Present**

Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Philip Chua, Sherri Collett, Charles Daniels

**BOARD APPROVED**

**OCT 21 2025**

**Meeting Called to Order at 5:30 PM**

**1. Meeting Opening**

Procedural: A. Call to Order - 5:30 p.m.

President Burns called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Procedural: B. Pledge of Allegiance

President Burns asked all students to lead in the Pledge of Alliance.

**2. Public Hearing on Proposed Harman K-12 School Closure and the receiving schools of Jennings Randolph Elementary, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School 5:30 P.M.**

Discussion, Information, Procedural: A. Public Hearing on Proposed Harman K-12 School Closure after SY 2025-2026

**Each board member received a packet containing the following documents:**

- A letter from Trish Bucher
- A chart with GSA scores from Jessica Pennington
- A paper from John Kelley about the cost of Harman School vs. savings of closure
- A letter from Beth Henry-Vance on behalf of the Harman Local School Improvement Council
- A letter from Rex Vance, a resident of Harman, WV
- A packet put together by the community, parents, and members of the LSIC, which was handed to the board by Lacey Mullenex

**Superintendent, Dr. Shawn Dilly, provided a presentation to the Board and public, and there is a hard copy on file.**

As we are looking at the impact of the budget as we move forward, I wanted to bring this particular slide back up because there's a lot of misunderstanding or misconceptions about how our budgets work. If you could advance to the next slide, please. I did present this last year a couple of different times, but one of the things I think it's important to recognize here is that between 82% and 85% of our budget is typically personnel costs.

By the time we add utilities, textbooks, insurance, maintenance, technology, transportation, and child nutrition, we're sitting with 98% of our budget consumed. This indicates that we really have only two avenues to reduce sizable deficit concerns that we're trying to outpace—either personnel, facilities, or both. Since our last school closure in 2017, we've lost 684 students enrolled. That's roughly equivalent to just under five and a half million dollars in revenues.

We know that this is part of an ongoing struggle with the funding formula, as a one-size-fits-all approach does not fit our needs. What we saw in 2022 were five school closures in West Virginia. In 2023, we saw nine school closures. In 2024, there were sixteen. And in 2025, there have currently been five school closures and sixteen more proposed, including Randolph County's closure. So, you can see that we are not alone in the challenges being faced across the state.

We recognize this is part of the second phase of the work we want to continue—fixing our funding formula, because a one-size-fits-all model does not support the needs of our system. One of the things to be aware of, and that continues to work against us, is if you look at the Harmon decline: 38% since 2013 through 2024. We've seen a decline in percentage enrollment. North Elementary is down 29%, and the average for the county is 15.5%. I also went ahead and added this year's numbers, which indicate a further decline compared to what we've seen from 2013 through 2024.

The proposed closure this evening—combining North and Harmon—is designed to address our ongoing financial concerns. That would save us roughly \$1.678 million to help assist with personnel optimization, operational efficiency, and resource reallocation to better meet the needs of our entire district.

One of the things that continues to be a challenge for us is our utilization numbers. North Elementary is at 53%, and Harmon is at 25%. We also have upgrade costs we would need to consider in the future to address ongoing financial concerns related to maintenance.

Another thing that many people don't understand is that if we are not sitting around the recommended 85% utilization, it becomes a barrier to receiving School Building Authority funding. Therefore, it's important that as we work to maintain our facilities, we also ensure we have proper utilization so we can maintain a viable stream of funding to support maintenance needs. We do have a very aging system, so it's crucial that we keep that target in mind.

There are also positives to consolidation and merger efforts. By aligning grade-level instruction, we could eliminate all split-grade classrooms throughout the district. We could also add full-time music and visual arts staff, as well as new school group programs that would benefit Harmon students.

High school students could gain access to advanced courses that we currently cannot afford to offer, as well as specialized programs beyond the core curriculum, including career and technical education. We could expand support staff and better serve students with diverse learning needs. We definitely have growing needs in that area that we currently do not have the funding to support.

Of course, there will always be community impact when we're talking about school mergers and closures. We will work to minimize that impact, including exploring modified bus routes for Harmon students and offering virtual learning as an option. We recognize that North's closure is not as disruptive since it is only about 3.1 miles from the other school, but it still allows us to address district-wide needs and academic opportunities.

So, I'm asking the Board this evening to support the two recommendations presented as part of the overall proposal for closures. This will help us bring opportunities to consider positions such as school counselors, PRO officers, school nurses, and social workers at each school; art and music programs; administrative and secretarial support; additional upper-level courses; CTE programs; maker spaces; and other technology that's currently out of reach due to financial limitations. These opportunities align with our goal to advance and strengthen our position so that, hopefully, at some point, we will no longer be ranked 55th in the state. That's all I have this evening.

Keith Matthew was the 1st member of the Harman community to speak on behalf of the closing of Harman.  
"The board's got a lawyer. Now, you brought the high school from Coalton up here to build this school.  
And the paper where Mr. Dilly (Dr. Shawn Dilly) said it was 31 minutes to Harman — is that in a vehicle or a bus?  
We'll answer some of those questions at the end, sir. They're going to make notes of those, okay? It's 31 minutes to Harman.  
That's what he said. But the drivers have to make their run — it's going to be about an hour and a half.  
I've seen in the paper this evening where Barbour County said you better leave Pickens alone, because they couldn't go to Barbour County. And I've been talking to Steve, Mr. Walmsley, up at the high school. He said he wanted to bring them down here.  
But from Point Mountain County line to Mason out on the county line, it'd be 50 minutes to get down here. That's too long. Fifty miles — I'm sorry, 50 miles.  
I don't know how long it would take them to get here, but it's too long. And I know you've got a problem here. But I'm here on behalf of the students.  
They can't ride our bus that long.  
Thank you."

Dixie Lee Murray was the 2nd person to speak on the closing of Harman K-12 School.  
"Good evening. I'm Dixie Lee Murray.  
Rebecca Hamlin Vance had prepared a statement to read this evening due to her husband having some health issues. She has reached out and asked me to read the following in her absence.  
Rebecca wanted to speak about her son, Jensen. He's five years old, in kindergarten, and has autism with very severe sensory processing issues. He does not handle big changes very well. He takes an excessive amount of time to adjust, resulting in a significant amount of behavioral changes, including aggression. His IEP is already a mile long and still considered a draft due to waiting for his evaluations to be finalized.  
He also is unable to ride the school bus due to his sensory processing disorder, and I have to drive him each day with accommodations made for his entrance for less sensory input. There are times that I'm not even able to go grocery shopping with him because it is too much after the drive to get to Elkins.  
Due to the lack of daycare in the area, we are a one-income household. Even though the trip to Harmon is not very far, it still adds up in the amount of gas it takes to go twice a day. I can't even fathom the financial strain we would face to have to go a further distance to get him back and forth to school.  
Since starting school, he is just recently beginning to have better days and remain for the entire duration of the school day without my having to come pick him up early or face his suspension. This is the result of the amazing and caring staff at Harmon, who have worked with him tirelessly and effortlessly. Jensen was borderline nonverbal—highly aggressive, disruptive, defiant—and the list goes on.  
That's a lot for such a little boy. But even at home, he's becoming calmer. He's beginning to talk more. He's finally holding a pencil correctly, starting to write, and beginning to read. He's sleeping at night. If it weren't for the staff at Harmon, I'm honestly not sure where we would be right now.  
Considering he was expelled for the same reasons related to his diagnosis at four years old from a preschool at a different school—they didn't care; they gave up on him two weeks into school. Harmon has not given up on him.  
They support him, encourage him, and constantly seek ways to improve his abilities and give him the resources and skills that he needs. They are able to do it in ways that, as a mother, I'm not even able to do. I'm terrified of the regression we may face if Harmon is closed, and of what degree of mental instability it will cause for my son.  
Not only from a parental perspective, but also from a medical perspective—for the sake of his health and his diagnosis—it's detrimental that we keep Harmon open.  
Thank you."

Sammy Roy was next to speak on the closing of Harman.  
"Good evening, board members. Dr. Dilly.  
I've spoken here a couple of times before. I had asked some questions the last time I spoke at one of the meetings—about 15 or 16 questions. Some of them were: What's the emergency plan that will provide a central location for food, shelter, and supervision for all students? They're crossing these mountains—they're bad. What if the bus wrecks? How are you going to keep the kids warm? But I never got an answer to these questions.  
I directed them—not against Dr. Dilly—but I directed them to him. I never received any answers on these. What about a hotel? If the kids have to stay over, what about a hotel or boarding for them? What about kids that have medication they have to take? How is this medication going to get to the kids?  
Phone service—over in our area, across the mountains, you have no phone service. So how are the parents going to be contacted that their kid is not coming home? There are a lot of questions here, a lot of concerns. And I teach safety—safety classes.  
And I always share this poem—I'm going to tell you part of it. You know, every decision we make has a consequence, whether it's good or bad. But, you know, I could have saved a life that day.  
It was a poem. I'm not sure who the author was. "If I'd have spoken up, I could have saved a life that day."  
But in this case, maybe it could save an injury, or it could save a life. If one of the school buses happened to wreck, we're putting a lot of kids' lives in danger. But if I would have spoken up and said, "Hey, we're not going to consolidate the schools," maybe I could have saved a life that day.  
It's too dangerous—transporting the kids across these mountains. Maybe I could have saved a life that day if I would have spoken up. And there's no child's life worth losing coming across these mountains.  
I know you've got budgets to balance, but there's got to be another way—somewhere—to do this without putting the kids' lives at risk. So I just wanted you to think about that.  
The decision you make tonight could save a kid's life. And, you know, God forbid that a kid would lose their life coming across those mountains—would you want to live with that the rest of your life?"

If I had spoken up and said, "No, we're not consolidating that school," that wouldn't have happened—but it would happen. You're the one that's got to live with it for the rest of your life.

So, you know, that's something—some food for thought. And I thank you for the time to speak here tonight. I belong to the fire department.

So, I know what these mountains are like, because I've spoken the other times I've been here. It's nasty across the mountains. There are wrecks across that mountain.

And I know it's just a matter—it's not if—it's when it's going to happen. But thank you for your time, and thank you for letting me speak. Thank you, sir."

Rex Vance was next to speak on the closing of Harman.

"My name is Rex Vance. I'm from Harman. I was born and raised in Whitmer. I'm not in a hospital—I'm in my home. I've seen it all. I worked for the Department of Highways for 27 and a half years, and you can't tell me anything about the roads and how bad they can be.

I have three kids. I have two grandchildren. My grandson lives in Virginia. He's ten years old.

We sleep in recliners. I haven't slept in a bed since 2006, because I can't. He talked about the closing of Harman. He said—I shouldn't say this, not to offend anyone—but he said, "That's about the stupidest thing I ever heard in my life, to close Harman." That's what he told me—ten years old. Sorry. He was very honest. If we were honest like kids are, we'd have a better outlook on life.

I get short-winded. Sorry. I'd just like to speak the truth. Do we know what we're really doing? Do we know what we're doing to the town of Harman? Whitmer has no stores—they're a ghost town. I live there. Almost a ghost town. What will happen to Harman? Has anyone ever gone over and looked at Harman School inside and out? Excellent condition. Probably one of the best-kept schools in Randolph County. I'm sorry—back in 2017, they said they had a roof problem in a room adjacent to the library. It was what they called a film room, having all that moisture going up through. They decided we had to replace every ceiling in the school. And we did.

Where did we get our money from? Who raised the money, people? We did. Exactly—we raised \$225,000 to \$250,000. Ceilings in each one of those rooms in Harman.

Who paid for the replacement of the roof at the junior high, middle school, whatever? Who paid for that? I don't know. I just wish that you would just consider.

I know the tax base is low. I have another question—are the board members bonded? You can answer that question."

Shasta Arbogast was next to speak on the closing of Harman.

"Hi, I haven't really prepared anything for this evening. I wasn't 100% expecting I was going to speak. But I would like to point out—it's obvious—we all see the "Road Closed" signs at KFC every single year.

From my understanding, they actually tried to run a full-size bus on some of the routes over in Harman, and they can't make the turns. So a full-size bus is not even able to be used. None of our questions have been answered in regard to what's going to happen if these kids do get stuck. I mean, where have the answers been for any of that?

I wouldn't want a kid's life in my hands. I wouldn't want that. I saw a picture this morning of the kids in Harman praying in front of their school. It shows the unity that these kids—these small communities—have. And it just makes me sick that we're attacking these rural schools.

It's upsetting. It's infuriating, because this is not the answer. This plan is not the answer. It's not foolproof. There are so many ways for it to fail. There are so many unknowns.

The fact that the word "waiver" can be used just to get around a law is sickening. A waiver on a child's life—is that not infuriating to everybody? I asked yesterday how that is even a possibility. It's unreal.

I'm hoping that you take into consideration Mr. Barad and the team that they're putting together. I know that he said he was willing to meet with them, work with them, and come up with a plan. Table these closures. Wait. Let a better plan be put together for these children.

All these kids are going to lose out on their extracurriculars. My best friend runs the extracurriculars in Harman—she's building this up for her daughter. If you get rid of this, these kids are not going to be involved. Parents don't want to drive clear to Elkins for that. They don't. It's a long drive to bring your kid to play basketball.

It's a long drive to bring your kid to do anything. These kids are going to suffer not only academically, but also through the mental health struggles and the travel. It's going to ruin everything.

So I really hope you take all these things into consideration. Numbers on a board are nothing. It's these kids' lives that really need to be thought about.

A waiver does not do it for me—and it never will. It's just not right. I'm going to try to use all my time. But yes, please table this and let's give him a chance to see what we've got. I mean, there are other plans."

Lacey Mullennex was next to speak on Harman School Credit, or Harman Success Criteria.

"Last year, the leadership team asked Harman School to show improvement in three areas: attendance, GSA scores, and i-Ready benchmark scores. Harman School showed improvement in all three.

Our current attendance rate is 95.47%, which is a great improvement over last year's attendance rate of 93.4%. In addition, our school attendance is better than the state average and all the potential receiving schools.

At the end of the 2024–2025 school year, on the 2023–2024 WV summative assessment—did I get that word right? *Listen—summative*—57% of our students scored partial mastery or above. In 2024–2025, 61% of our students scored at partial mastery or above on their summative assessment, which is a 4% increase.

The following two pyramids show the i-Ready benchmark data for 2024–2025. The first pyramid shows Benchmark 1, and the second shows the end-of-year benchmark. You can see the large amount of growth in the grid. At the beginning of the year, 6% of our students were at grade level, while at the end of the year, 44% of our students were at grade level. This shows a 38% growth overall.

The following two pyramids show i-Ready benchmark data for 2024–2025 in English. At the beginning of the year, 10% of our students were at grade level, while at the end of the year, 39% of our students were at grade level. This shows a 29% growth.

Thank you."

Jessica Pennington was next to speak on the attendance, GSA scores, and i-Ready benchmarks in connection with the Harman K-12 School closing.

"Harman School has shown improvement in all three areas identified by the leadership team last year: attendance, GSA scores, and i-Ready benchmark scores. Our current attendance rate is 95.47%, which is a great improvement over last year's rate of 93.4%. In addition, our school attendance is better than the state average and all potential receiving schools. On the 2023-2024 WVDE Summative Assessment, 57% of our students scored at partial mastery or above. In 2024-2025, 61% of our students scored at partial mastery or above, which is a 4% increase. The following two pyramids show the i-Ready benchmark data for 2024-2025. The first pyramid represents Benchmark 1, and the second represents the end-of-year benchmark. You can see a large amount of growth in mathematics. At the beginning of the year, 6% of our students were at grade level, while at the end of the year, 44% were at grade level, showing a 38% increase. The following two pyramids show i-Ready benchmark data for English language arts. At the beginning of the year, 10% of our students were at grade level, while at the end of the year, 39% were at grade level, showing a 29% increase. Thank you."

Mike Ross, a lifetime resident of Coalton, WV, spoke on the closing of Harman K-12 School.

"Good evening. My name is Mike Ross, and I'm a lifetime resident of Coalton, West Virginia. I've been around the Randolph County school system for eighty-seven years, and I don't feel intimidated when dealing with people outside the county or across the state. I'm here tonight to talk about the closing of Harman K-12 School and the idea of consolidation in the Alpine communities. I believe that when you close these schools, you're not only punishing the kids and the parents—you're also hurting the communities. Randolph County is an unusual county. It's the largest county in the state, over a thousand square miles. What works in smaller counties doesn't necessarily work here in Randolph County. The people who could change this situation are not being utilized the way they should be. The state legislature makes the rules. Nobody on the State Board of Education is elected by the people—they're appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate.

Here in the Harman area, we have state representation. Senator Randy Smith, who represents Tucker County and parts of Harman, is the number two man in the state. If something were to happen to Patrick Morrissey, Randy Smith would be the governor. He's right here in our backyard, and I don't know why he's not here tonight—but he probably should be.

We also have senators who voted for the Hope Scholarship. That scholarship takes money out of the same pot that funds the public school system. You can't keep taking out without putting something back in. Eventually, you're overloading the wagon, and that's something that needs to be addressed—by the teachers, the associations, and by individuals in the outlying areas like Harman and Pickens.

You can sit in Pickens right now and earn a master's degree. Universities across the country advertise that kind of virtual learning. We saw it work during COVID, and I don't see why we can't use the same technology to help our smaller communities. Harman, Pickens, and Coalton are good communities with solid buildings, good roads, new water systems, and new sewer systems. Why would you want to put those kids on a bus and send them somewhere else? You can't tell me that moving 140 students is going to solve anything.

We need leadership. We need three of you to say "no." I read Brad Johnson's editorial this morning, and he made a lot of sense. He compared the Randolph County Board to the Barbour County Board, and it's easier down there—they only have one high school. I know some people are afraid to speak up because of what's said by the Department of Education in Charleston or because they're worried about being charged with something minor, but I wouldn't worry about that. Buckhannon is operating under a state order without a levy, and they're doing just fine. They have a superintendent and two assistant superintendents, and they're making it work.

I just hope you'll take a serious look at this before making a decision. Thank you."

Up to speak was John Kelly on the closing of Harman, but then he let his wife, Mary Lynn Kelly, go first.

"Good evening, board and concerned community. I was told one time that no one cares what you know unless they know why you care. So, I wanted to introduce myself. My name is Mary Lynn Kelly. I was a Fan of Inner, and I started going around the school in Harman. I think I'm related to half the teachers there. I'm a fourth-generation West Virginian, but we only came back during the summer. I know Mazie's numbers and half the people in here, so I'm very honored to be here this week for the Dry Fork Festival that is held on the park named after my father.

When we were approached by Rex Paugh, who I think is a visionary, I was amazed by his vision for the joy that you all would build and spread for this community. It was contagious, and it was the obvious thing to do. We have been honored to watch it grow in this community, and it just happened to be this week, so we're trying to get up to speed.

There are a couple of things I want you to understand personally. My family has been involved with Harman for four generations—going back to the 1800s when the old mill was part of the Harman area, as well as the rec center and everything there. I wanted you to understand that personal connection.

Professionally, I helped start the Challenger Learning Center. You have one here, and you have one in Wheeling—that was extraordinary—and I ran the one in Arizona. So, please consider me a resource. I've been doing background research. I served on the State Board of Education, and I know where you are.

As I was reading through the documents and after attending the board meeting last night, where we met and had some questions answered by some of your team—by the way, you have an extraordinary staff to work with—I was really glad to hear that an attorney would be here. In Arizona, we had to have an attorney at every meeting.

When I was reading through this, one of the things that stood out to me is that I don't know that you necessarily have a vote. If I were reviewing this from my board experience, I would look at the legislation—Code 18-2E-5D—and I would not know that you could even vote to close the school because you can't authentically. I did some research—thank you, Lacy—and looked at the travel times. The legislation would have to be changed before you could even vote to close it.

If a waiver was allowed, that would also have to be something you'd need to escalate to school funding formulas. So, I would like for you all—I'm being very protective of the board—to get clarification, because a lot of times the legislative teams that are in place say it's your fault. But legally, you have a shield. You have a shield here to stand behind.

Another issue is the shortage of bus drivers. There is an incredible need. I mean, it looked like fun—I even considered bus driving yesterday—but if you cannot hire a bus driver, then this is a moot point as well. First of all, you'd have to have one qualified. It sounds like a very difficult job and requires a lot of training. You could do it, but it sounds like the pay is not enough for someone to step forward and take it on.

So, in my mind, if I were preparing, you have two legal things to stand behind: you cannot make this change until those pieces are in place. And you need to put it back on the legislative team to provide that support.

In Arizona—and my husband John will talk more about this because he has worked on it—we dealt with similar issues with the school funding formula. I would be happy to meet with any of you to brainstorm. What we're trying to do in Phoenix is very similar to what you're facing here. During COVID, the inner-city schools were depleted because people sold their houses for economic gain and moved out to the suburbs. We're facing the same kinds of challenges, so you are not alone.

I think we ought to get a brainstorming session together if it would help, and we would be happy to do that. It would be our joy. Thank you again for your service."

John Kelly then spoke on the closing of Harman and the impacts it would have.

"Thank you, Madam Chair, Dr. Dilly, and staff. I'm so pleased to be here. I am so lucky to have been married into the Vandevender family, so I've had a chance to be a part of the Harman community for the last thirty-eight or so years. We met originally in Washington, D.C. I'm actually a lobbyist by trade, so this is a lobbying dream—to have this kind of community support for something, to be able to go to your legislature, to go to your governor, to go to your federal representatives.

You are in such an impossible situation. The task you've been given—to make a fiscal decision with so much human impact—is just so difficult. I feel for you, and I know your staff is doing the best they can under this very difficult position.

But in my opinion, there are a couple of things that the staff has shared with us—some research about the proposed cost savings—and I think there are some questions about whether those cost savings will materialize in the way they've been laid out. Generally, they don't always work out. If you haven't liquidated the building, you're still paying utilities. You still have personnel costs to provide services to the students. Obviously, we've talked about transportation to the nth degree and all the issues there, but there's a fiscal situation—so many different costs that will continue to be there.

If you don't have the school, you don't have the asset. You don't have the value, and it will have a tremendous impact. It will also have an impact on the community center that is named after my wife's father, because they serve the same kids that you're serving with the Harman School. So, there is a complementary value associated with the school and the community center, and there is a complementary deficit and injury if that does not continue.

Ultimately, this is going to have to be a legislative or a state board decision. As Dr. Dilly said, a one-size-fits-all school planning formula is a one-size-fits-few. And as my wife said, we're having the same set of issues in Arizona, the same set of issues across the country. These are issues beyond your control.

But the solutions are there. There are definitely going to be solutions. I know the legislature is taking up a variety of different ideas—they've had hearings on this topic. It's a statewide issue. It's a matter of statewide concern. It's not your responsibility to solve the state's problem—it is the state's responsibility to solve the state's problem. You have to take care of your kids.

As we were driving out of Harman, there's a billboard that just hits you right in the face. It says, 'Protect Our Children.' I was thinking about that as we were driving up to the board meeting yesterday—that was a white backlight moment for me. I do not want that for your kids. I do not want that for any of these kids.

I think you are on the right track. You're doing the best you can. But I really hope that you will defer this decision to others at the state level who are going to make it. I do have some documents that I'd like to share—just cause and pass. Thank you very much."

Justin Murray was up to voice his concerns on closing Harman K-12 School.

"Good evening. Good evening—believe it, we're friends anyway.

Good evening, Board of Education members. I put together some information and some comments that I want to review tonight. These are comments that have been made publicly over the past six months by the Randolph County Schools leadership. These are the comments that have been given to you to make a really tough decision regarding the closing of Harman School.

Before I say anything, I want to remind you that your responsibility is to provide a thorough and efficient education system for all kids in Randolph County. So, here we go.

This was from a meeting: *'These new classroom sizes aren't terrible—I mean, they're not horrible. The total cost savings to close Harman is \$630,000, but moving the students to new schools will retain 30% of that because of our staff. So, there's really not as much savings as we anticipated. But the number doesn't include the \$100,000 that got voted in by the state legislature. Because of this, we need to reconsider maybe closing more schools. Because of staffing issues, we need to save \$4 million, and our biggest savings is in staffing positions, not building closures. The staffing savings is less per building than I was anticipating, and I'm concerned that the proposal hasn't been aggressive enough.'*

The budget deficit in January was \$2 million. In June, it was \$3 million. But now, the budget is balanced.

In all the conversations I've listened to, I've never heard the following words: *'What can we do to cut costs and not affect our children?'* I've never heard that once. There's never been a conversation about kids in any of these meetings, which shocks me. That should be our number one priority.

Public schools all around the state—and all around the country—are losing students. The number one reason students leave public schools is because of the environment. That means morale, lack of positive support, lack of a healthy school climate, and bullying. I'm concerned that if we're not strategic with our decisions, we're going to push even more kids out of public schools.

When fewer kids attend public schools, the Hope Scholarship gives parents a financial incentive to take them out. But when we lose more kids, that means less revenue for Randolph County. And that means you're going to be right back here doing this all over again.

Last night, at the Board of Education meeting, Dr. Dilly said the following: *'We're going to facilitate several community meetings in the coming weeks. These meetings will focus on discussing potential school closure options, exploring strategies to improve educational opportunities, and identifying ways to strengthen and support both our schools and the communities they serve. The goal is to ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about the future of education in Randolph County.'*

I applaud you for those words. I think that's leadership. That's saying, 'Hey, these are meetings we need to do.'

Ultimately, from the public meetings on school closures over the last twelve to sixteen months, it's clear that there are so many obstacles to overcome. This is a lot—it really is.

So, my suggestion this evening, as my time is up, is this: I would ask the Board of Education members to table the vote tonight until these community meetings have taken place. Let's actually talk about solutions that don't put children at risk and that allow us to be strategic for the future.

We need to ask ourselves—do we really want to keep pushing children out? Many are already using the Hope Scholarship or being homeschooled, and that's money leaving Randolph County. We're not going to be able to balance a budget if that continues.

So remember, last but not least—your responsibility is to provide a thorough and efficient education system for every one of the kids in Randolph County.

Thank you so much for your time."

Dana Varner spoke about the closing of Harman K-12 School.

"Everything that I had thought about saying has already been said, other than this—you know, our kids want to be able to participate in activities if they come over here. Not every parent works in a way that allows them to help or be here to pick up their child, and not all of them have vehicles. Some parents don't have reliable transportation, and some of the kids live with their

grandparents who don't have vehicles either.

It just needs to be considered. There has to be a different way. Try doing the ones that are closer or open first and see how that works out, instead of making us all come across the mountains. It just doesn't make much sense to me. There's got to be a better way.

Thank you."

Presley Pennington, a student from Harman K-12, spoke about the closing of Harman K-12 School.

"Dr. Dilly and distinguished board members, my name is Presley Pennington, and I attend seventh grade at Highland School. I was wondering—have you ever thought about closing some schools down in other areas and leaving Harman and Pickens alone?

If you close Harman, the students who play sports aren't going to have the same opportunities to play baseball or basketball, because there will be so many kids on the team. If they do get to play, it won't be the same experience.

I had a sprained ankle a few weeks ago, and when the buses have to run across those bad mountains, it's going to be a lot worse than a sprained ankle. If you do this, you're putting a lot of students' lives at risk.

And you might think the teachers are just trying to save their jobs—but really, they're trying to save our lives from being sent over those mountains for hours.

Thank you."

Talitha Booker, a homeschool student and a resident of the community of Harman, spoke about the closing of Harman K-12 School.

"My name is Talitha Booker, and I would like to read something my mom wrote. I would like to talk about an analogy Dr. Dilly shared at the August 5th meeting and modify it to better reflect our reality.

It was about a family that had to make some tough decisions due to the father starting to lose hours and eventually losing his job altogether. Dr. Dilly used this analogy as a picture for what we're going through and the tough decisions that we face. I've taken the liberty of naming that family the Randolphs.

Now, just like in Dr. Dilly's picture, the Randolphs have a pretty comfortable and prosperous life. Their mortgages are paid on time, and all fourteen kids have substantial college funds. Right now, the Randolphs' neighbors from across the street, named the Levys, have a much more impressive lifestyle. They have a fully paid vacation house, a couple of drivers for their kids, tutors for their kids, and all these extras—and they have a live-in nanny. It's hard not to admire them from across the street.

Now something pretty amazing happens to the Randolphs. The rich great-uncle Sam passes away. No, it's not amazing that he passed—it's that he leaves them a pretty substantial inheritance. The Randolphs soon take advantage of their good fortune. They hire a couple of babysitters, a couple of tutors, and a couple of drivers. It is such a wonderful feeling to free up time for the parents. The family seems to be thriving.

Time passes, and the older kids start supporting themselves a little. This means the Randolphs have fewer mouths to feed. The extra help is still something they enjoy, however, only four years down the road, their inheritance from Great-Uncle Sam is used up. It is time to make some hard decisions and cut back on spending.

The Randolphs decide to let go of the tutors. Letting go of the drivers and babysitters, though, is not an option—they make life so convenient. The family even starts talking about using their youngest child's college fund to pay for the babysitters. Little Harman is years away from college, so it seems like an easy choice at the time.

But the logical move for the Randolphs would be to look back at their lives four years ago and see how life was still good. Life without babysitters and drivers was still good.

Mr. Randolph County Board, you are balancing your budget with a surplus in the three-million range. Can you take some time to just look at what staffing adjustments you made with your inherited COVID money? Can you just adjust back to basics?

Thank you for your time. Thank you."

Trish Bucher, a resident of the Harman community and a homeschool parent, spoke about the proposed closing of Harman K-12 School.

"Good evening, all. My name is Trish Bucher, and I'm here to speak on the Harman closure. I have been doing a lot of listening, reading, watching, and learning. My learning has involved looking at data since the 2018 fiscal year and making comparisons on staffing. I've emailed you all some charts that I made, and I was going to speak on those, but the three-minute time slot isn't much.

So, I'm trying to figure out how we are here again, in less than a year, yet the considerations haven't changed. I understand the complexity of the personnel needed for a building to stay open while having so few students. But the closure of Harman as a cost-saving measure is not the right answer.

The proposed closure of Harman is a sham solution because the savings simply aren't there. I'll quote Mr. Smith's own words from August 19th: *'Building closure is minimal to your savings—it is in personnel.'* I don't have time to get into all the numbers tonight, but we have circumstances very similar to those that the Pickens LSIC presented.

The proposed closure of Harman means retention of teachers with seniority, which means the savings listed on some of Dr. Dilly's charts are quite inflated. You also have to account for the number of students whose parents have sworn not to let their kids cross the mountains daily. That's a daily loss in revenue, as was brought up last night.

May we please see an attempt at other solutions—other solutions besides this non-solution that you have overplayed? Even one of your own board members invested his time speaking with community members and built a proposal, but we haven't heard anything else about it. May you run the numbers on that?

May we see savings calculated if we were to implement proximity learning in rural high schools—maybe even in all high schools?

May you please look at the savings stated in the standing ten-year plan that involves consolidation of city schools instead?

Many presenters have brought study after study showing the detrimental effects of school closures on small communities and the dangers of long commutes. Let us listen to them.

In the effort to balance the budget, you seem to have completely forgotten the reason this institution exists—the children. Consider the children. West Virginia ranks 55th out of 55 and 47th in education nationwide. What positive measures are you taking? What steps are being implemented to address that?

Do you see the reason why parents are taking advantage of school choice options? It's because the public education system is failing them. You will continue to lose more students if your focus remains misplaced.

Board members, my final question to you is this: In whose interest are you making your decision tonight? Is it for self-preservation—to avoid possible misdemeanor charges? Is it in Dr. Dilly's interest, to help him accomplish the one main task he was hired for—the closure of Randolph County schools? Or is it in the children's best interest—the ones for whom this school system exists?

Please vote for what is in the children's best interest. Keep Harman School open.

Thank you."

After Trish Bucher spoke, President Burns thanked everyone who had signed up to speak regarding the Harman closure and turned the meeting over to the administration. He explained that the administration had been taking notes on the questions presented and would now have an opportunity to respond.

Dr. Dilly began by acknowledging the challenges and concerns related to transportation and the proposal being discussed. He stated that while the administration recognized these concerns, there were very few options available for the school system to achieve its financial goals. He explained that the proposed consolidations, including those of in-town schools, were based on facility utilization and capacity. He emphasized that if greater opportunities for consolidation existed within the in-town schools, those would have already been proposed. The current plan, he said, was built around the system's ability to consolidate where possible and prepare for the continued decline in student enrollment over the next two to three years.

Dr. Dilly addressed questions regarding personnel and staffing, explaining that personnel reductions must accompany building closures because each school requires a minimum level of staffing to operate. Over the past several years, he noted, secondary schools have absorbed the largest share of reductions, and without structural changes, class sizes would need to reach forty to fifty students to meet financial goals—a situation he described as unrealistic and unacceptable.

He stated that combining personnel adjustments with building consolidations was necessary to maintain quality education and retain staff. "The benefit is the personnel, not the building," Dr. Dilly said, emphasizing that the system's focus should be on maintaining the quality of teachers and staff rather than buildings.

Addressing transportation safety concerns, Dr. Dilly noted that buses in Randolph County collectively travel nearly 3,000 miles each day and that such distances are common statewide. He said that in his 24 years in education, he could recall only one instance in multiple districts where students had to stay overnight due to weather. He added that the district has emergency and safety plans in place and that proactive decisions are regularly made regarding weather-related closures.

Dr. Dilly acknowledged that long bus rides are not ideal but stated that they are already a reality for some students in Randolph County. He shared that when he attended school in Tucker County, he rode the bus for forty-five minutes each way and knew students who traveled an hour and a half daily. He reiterated that the district is working to minimize bus times wherever possible but that options are limited due to financial and regulatory constraints.

He concluded by saying that while the proposal may not be ideal, it represents one of the few viable paths forward under current financial and governance requirements. He emphasized his willingness to consider alternative solutions, stating that he has yet to be presented with a viable plan that could achieve the necessary savings without significant negative impacts on students.

Following his remarks, Dr. Dilly turned the discussion over to Brad Smith, Finance Director for Randolph County Schools, and invited him to share his thoughts on the financial aspects of the proposal.

After Dr. Dilly concluded his remarks, he asked Brad Smith, Finance Director for Randolph County Schools, to review the current budget situation and explain the factors that allowed the district to meet its budget last year.

President Burns said, "Mr. Smith, can you go over the budget again? I know that our budget wasn't as weak as we thought it might be, and we talked about it a little last night. But just so that you can address it again, can you explain why we made the budget this past year—and some of the reasons that, while they helped us meet it, are not great reasons? Also, if we continue the way we are, what will next year look like?"

Mr. Smith responded by explaining that the school system's budget is developed on a year-by-year basis. "We're given a set amount of revenues, and we take the expenditures we expect to have, and we need to balance those out each year," he said. "For the last several years, we have been using carryover funds that were built up in previous years in order to balance the budget. In other words, we are not currently living within the means of the revenue that the state is providing to us."

He went on to explain that when a budget relies on carryover funds, the district spends the year monitoring whether revenues keep up with expenditures. "Last year, our local share dollars came in much higher than expected, especially in the last quarter," Mr. Smith said. "They were up by over six hundred thousand dollars. So, of the \$2.8 million in carryover funds that we had set aside, we only used a little over six hundred thousand."

He clarified that this meant expenses only exceeded revenues by about six hundred thousand dollars last year, which was an improvement over projections. "Now that we know that figure," he continued, "the budget we've put in place for this year was also short. We did not submit a balanced budget to the state. However, since FY25 finished better than expected, I'm able to supplement additional carryover into this year's budget."

Mr. Smith stated that approximately \$3 million in carryover funds are now being used to balance the current year's budget. "Yes, FY25 finished well, and we do have roughly the three percent that the state asks us to carry over each year," he said. "But when you reduce the roughly \$3 million that it's taking to balance this year's budget, that leaves us with about one million dollars—which is not the full three percent."

He concluded by noting that while the district managed to meet its budget last year, the reasons for that outcome—unexpectedly higher revenues and reliance on carryover—are not sustainable long term.

Following Dr. Dilly's comments, Board Member Janie Newlon asked, "If there's nothing else, are we able to offer Harman virtual?"

Dr. Dilly responded, "Yes, we can absolutely offer that. This is one of the reasons we wanted to pilot the math program this year. The board provided approval for that last night. We also have a student here in the Elkins area who is piloting the full program, and we're excited about that opportunity because it's an option we can definitely bring to the table for our communities."

Janie Newlon then asked, "If the building were to be closed and we're offering virtual programs to the students, would the students be able to access those programs in the building?"

Dr. Dilly replied, "I think there are different possibilities, and ultimately, it's going to come down to some decisions by the board. My hope and recommendation would be that we turn the building over to the community so that it could serve as a community center. Our thought process was that, in order to support this virtual program—depending on participation numbers—we would be willing to continue supporting the technology components and network there, as well as potentially providing a facilitator. That facilitator could help students locally even though instruction would be live and virtual. We've even had staff express interest in filling that kind of role if it were to move forward."

President Burns then asked if anyone else had questions regarding Section Two. Seeing none, he announced, "We need to take a short recess to allow sign-ups for the next hearing session for the proposed closure of Harman and the receiving school of Jennings Randolph Elementary."

He continued, "The sign-up sheet will be here at the podium, just as it was before. We'll take a ten-minute recess to give everyone an opportunity to sign up to speak."

At 6:55 p.m., the board went into a ten-minute recess.

### **3. Public Hearing on Proposed North Elementary School Closure and the receiving school of Jennings Randolph Elementary School 6:30 P.M.**

Discussion, Information, Procedural: A. Public Hearing on Proposed North Elementary School Closure after SY 2025-2026

President Burns asked if she could get a motion to open the proposed public hearing on the closure of North Elementary School and the designation of Jennings Randolph Elementary School as the receiving school. Motion was approved at 7:06 p.m.

Motion to Call back to Order: A. Public Hearing on Proposed North Elementary School Closure after SY 2025-26

Motion by Philip Chua, Seconded by Sherry Collett

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Philip Chua, Charles Danniels

President Burns announced that the hearing would now proceed and reminded everyone to maintain order.

Brittany McCray, was the 1st public speaker, she is a teacher with Randolph County Schools and a homeschooling mom, was the first to speak on the closing of North Elementary School and why it needs to happen.

"Good evening, Dr. Dilly and members of the Board.

Hold on one second—is my mic on?

It's on, but it doesn't sound like it's very loud. Can we turn that mic up, please?

How about that? Yeah.

Good evening again, Dr. Dilly and members of the Board. My name is Brittany McCray. I'm a kindergarten and first-grade teacher at North Elementary School. I've been a teacher in public education for seventeen years, and I also homeschool my own children.

At a board meeting earlier this year, Dr. Dilly reported that there were currently four hundred and thirty-eight students in Randolph County who were either homeschooling or using the Hope Scholarship. Sadly, I didn't hear anyone ask why. I'm here tonight to share some of those reasons with you, and I hope I can articulate them clearly, because they're tightly woven together through my two perspectives—as both a homeschool parent and a public educator.

It should come as no surprise that at the top of the list of reasons families choose to homeschool or pursue other means of educating their children is poor academic performance. Randolph County now ranks fifty-fifth in the state, with many of our schools in the bottom tiers of their subgroups. Mrs. Robinson reported last night that our iReady scores were lower this year than they were last year. Why? There are several reasons.

Many teachers aren't teaching grade-level content. In an effort to differentiate instruction, we're actually watering down the material instead of providing the support students need to reach grade-level growth. There's little accountability. Administrators have either chosen not to enforce standards—not just grade-level content, but also the code of conduct and professional standards—or they feel like they aren't allowed to. Both are unacceptable.

Systems are being put in place that cater to the lowest performers, both staff and students. Most of us do our jobs well, but we're being micromanaged instead of having administrators directly address the individuals who are not meeting expectations. That kind of passive-aggressive approach doesn't work.

When there's no consequence for poor work ethic and no reward for good work ethic, there's no motivation. It punishes the people who are producing results and does nothing to improve the habits of those who are not.

The erosion of the nuclear family unit, the increase in technology use among young children and adolescents, and the bureaucratic red tape have resulted in unaddressed behaviors that disrupt the learning environment and destroy the sense of peace and security we try to build in our classrooms. Students shouldn't be flipping desks and punching teachers—and it's not just middle and high school students; some of the youngest ones have the most violent behaviors.

When behavior isn't addressed, it lowers the bar for everyone. The percentage of students behaving poorly increases, because if some can get away with it, why can't they all?

Somewhere along the way, an "everything" mindset has been applied to public schools. We're now responsible for it all. We have doctors and dentists in our schools. We're not only responsible for academics, but also for the physical, mental, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. Society expects us to teach everything—from hygiene and toileting to cooking, balancing a checkbook, and filing taxes. This leaves little time for the standards we're actually supposed to be teaching.

There aren't enough employees to properly staff buildings or keep everything running smoothly. Vacancies go unfilled, teachers cover multiple classes a day during planning periods, and services are canceled. Bus routes are unreliable, and that negatively impacts both student achievement and community relationships.

The current state of our public schools isn't appealing to prospective employees. There are only six students at Davis & Elkins College completing their teaching residency this year—three of them at North—and only five plan to teach in West Virginia. None plan to stay in Randolph County.

Legislators with little to no experience with children set unrealistic and inappropriate expectations for both staff and students. We spend years studying child development and learning theory, only to be required to teach standards that are not developmentally appropriate and to deliver instruction through scripted curricula. Kindergarten has become the old second grade. Students take spelling tests by midterm of the first nine weeks. We're told to differentiate instruction, then forced to give standardized tests, and criticized when students don't meet the standards.

We ignore years of brain research showing that screens are detrimental to development, yet we require daily usage of them. Public education is a service, and like any industry, competition breeds excellence. If public education produced better results, parents wouldn't need to seek alternatives. Education is a parental responsibility. I can delegate the operation of educating my children, but not the responsibility. My mission field may be public education, but my children's is not. My job is to provide a firm foundation for adulthood—not to turn them loose before the concrete is set.

You won't find many people more sentimentally attached to North Elementary than I am. All five of my siblings and I attended North Elementary. My parents had children enrolled there from 1981 until 2002. The teachers there inspired me to become a teacher myself. I was hired and mentored by the same teachers when I returned home after teaching in Barbour County for five years. I've taught my nieces, nephews, neighbors, and friends' children. We've built a family there.

I know everyone in the county feels the same about their community schools, but we cannot continue to fund buildings instead of children. We can build new families at new schools. Every student will be welcomed with open arms by any staff member in any building in Randolph County, regardless of past rivalries. We can't change the state aid formula for public schools this year or the amount of funding we receive to educate students—but we can be responsible stewards of what we've been given. We have control over that much. So I ask you, please vote to consolidate, so that our focus can shift to solving the problems we actually can control—the real root causes. Parents are unenrolling their children, and we need to begin making improvements. Consolidate schools so that we can have fully staffed buildings and bring back programs like art and library sciences. Then, instead of planning future consolidations, let's work to rebuild trust and re-enroll students by providing safe environments and high-quality education. We cannot continue to do what we've always done and expect different results. It's time for a change. Thank you."

Joe Viola, a community member who has volunteered at North Elementary for many years, spoke next about his experiences and impressions of the school. "My remarks aren't going to be nearly as prepared as Ms. McCray's, but I've been going to North for at least the last ten years for a few different activities. I usually come in for the Read Aloud program — in fact, I read to Ms. McCray's class today. Throughout those years, it has always seemed to me that North was incredibly disciplined and full of spirit. Looking back on my own childhood, when I walked down the halls of my old school and there'd be books flying through the air and spitballs stuck to the ceiling, it's refreshing to go to North and see how organized and focused it is. As further evidence of that, the school started a running program about ten years ago, and about half the eligible students participate. That kind of involvement says a lot about the students and staff there. Thank you."

Michelle Depp, an educator with Randolph County Schools, parent, taxpayer, and former parent of several graduates, spoke about the difficult decision before the board and the importance of acting within the available window of time. "Good evening again. My name is Michelle Depp. I am here not only as an educator for Randolph County Schools, but also as a parent, a taxpayer, and a former parent of some pretty darn amazing kids who graduated from Elkins High — the Tigers. I have been to every board meeting or listened in to every board meeting for probably the past year and a half. Even when I was out of the country, I listened in to the board meetings. Many, many things have been said, and emotions have been high. I had no intention of speaking tonight. I read Brittany's speech before she gave it, and she said a lot of the things that needed to be said. We have a very rare window of time right now, where you as a board have to make a decision. Once that window of time closes, it's gone. We have no other choices left after that window closes. If a vote is not taken, that window can't simply be reopened. If a vote is taken and circumstances change — if some new funding situation arises — the decision can be rescinded. But if you miss that window now, it's closed and can't be revisited. If you make the decision, as tough, painful, and horrible as it is for every one of us — every person in this room, every child, every teacher, every employee of this district — it *can* be undone if something amazing were to happen. One thing that hasn't been pointed out publicly, or at least I don't recall hearing it said, is that the money the state of West Virginia allocated to two of our schools because of their rural and remote status is a one-time allocation for this year. There is no guarantee that funding will return to the budget next year. I've had several conversations with our local legislators trying to figure out where that money falls, and there is no guarantee that it will be reallocated. So banking on money that isn't guaranteed — we can't do that. When we look at the numbers Brad presented, that extra \$250,000 isn't promised. It's not guaranteed. It could vanish. So when you make this decision, please keep those things in mind: that money might not be there, and that vote could be rescinded if something were to change. Thank you."

After the final public comment, President Burns asked if there were any questions or additional comments from the Board. "Are there any questions from the Board? Anything else for Section Three from the Board?" She then addressed the next item on the agenda. "As far as the public hearing for Jennings Randolph Elementary as the receiving school for Harman K-12, we'll put out another sign-up sheet and give everyone a few minutes to sign up." "I think that's on the agenda for 7:30," President Burns added. "Okay, so we'll take a ten-minute break, put the sign-up sheet up here, and then we'll be back at 7:30." Section Three closed at 7:20 p.m. for a ten-minute recess.

#### **4. Public Hearing for Jennings Randolph Elementary School a receiving school for Harman K-12 and North Elementary School 7:30 P.M.**

Discussion, Information, Procedural: A. Hearing for Jennings Randolph Elementary School a receiving school for Harman K-12 School and North Elementary School

President Burns called the meeting back to order at 7:31 p.m. after a ten-minute recess. She noted that, as the receiving school for Harman K-12 and North Elementary, several individuals had signed up to speak. She then requested a motion to open Section Four for discussion.

Motion to Call Back to Order  
Motion by Philip Chua, Seconded by Sherri Collett  
Final Resolution: Motion Carries  
Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Philip Chua, Charles Daniels

President Burns stated that approximately five people had signed up to speak and announced that Ms. Lacey Mullinex would be the first speaker.

Lacey Mullinex, speaking on behalf of the Local School Improvement Council members of Harman who could not attend, addressed the Board with concerns about the impact statement related to the proposed closure of Harman School.

"Good evening. I'm here speaking on behalf of the LSIC members of Harman who could not be here. Good evening, Board of Education members, Randolph County Schools staff, and concerned citizens.

I'm here to share concerns about the impact statement concerning the closure of Harman School, specifically Section 3.2.E – Student Transportation. It states that there will be an increase in current transportation times from thirteen to forty-four minutes, while the accompanying table shows an increase of only eight to twenty-five minutes. These contradict each other, but neither is accurate.

The increase in bus route times will be substantially greater than this. Some of our students will be getting on the bus as early as 5:47 a.m. and will have bus rides lasting as long as one hour and twenty-three minutes one way. All our buses will be required to have waivers because they'll exceed the allotted travel time for elementary, middle, and high school students, per West Virginia Code 18-2E-5A. A Harman student could potentially spend thirteen hours and fifty minutes on a school bus per week.

Section 3.2.B – Facilities Descriptive Map 1 lists the distance and travel times from Harman to the proposed receiving schools. These times represent car travel in normal weather conditions, not bus travel, nor during inclement weather. It's also important to note that most of the route will have no cell phone service and very limited radio service, meaning the driver will be out of contact with emergency personnel and county office staff for much of the trip.

On page twenty-nine, under 'Travel Time to Neighboring Public Schools,' it is noted that Harman students may commute approximately thirty miles to Davis-Thomas Elementary and thirty-five miles to Tucker County High. To my knowledge, there is no official agreement guaranteeing that Harman students could enroll in the Tucker County School District.

Again, there are still errors in the data presented in the impact statement. According to the West Virginia Board of Education Code 18-5-13, board members are required to use the information in the impact statement to substantiate their decision regarding closure. Inaccurate or skewed data cannot be considered a valid source to justify the consolidation of Harman School.

On page thirty-five, the impact statement notes that the receiving schools are prepared to offer virtual learning opportunities with the addition of a facilitator and by maintaining an internet access location in the Harman community. This appears to be an attempt to address the fact that most Harman students have limited access to reliable internet and cellular data. However, there is currently no virtual hub in place.

Is this a plan? Dr. Dilly did speak on that earlier, but the Board cannot weigh possibilities of a plan that doesn't yet exist. Do we actually have an established plan, and what would it look like? Would parents have the opportunity to send their children to a virtual learning environment? Would they be bused? Would we still have to pay for the facilities department?

Are we really saving money with the creation of this new virtual hub? And again, would there be a new salaried position created for a facilitator at this hub? Would it be housed at Harman School? This plan is too vague to be included in an impact statement.

There is a real need for Harman School to remain an active educational facility for our community. Thank you for your attention and concern to these matters."

Beth Henry-Vance, speaking on behalf of the Harman LSIC members who could not attend, provided financial information regarding the estimated cost of operating Harman School compared to the projected savings if the school were to close.

"Good evening, thank you. I'm also sharing this on behalf of the Harman LSIC members who could not be here tonight. This information is included in the packet I handed out earlier. I would like to share an overview of the estimated cost of operating Harman School compared to the projected savings if the school were to close.

The impact statement shows that the annual cost of operating Harman School is approximately \$1.6 million. That includes \$99,872 for utilities, \$1.26 million for personnel, \$23,843 for maintenance, \$100,826 for transportation, and \$122,111 for other costs.

When looking at the projected savings from closure, we estimate the actual total to be a negative \$41,733.66 — meaning that closing the school would cost more, rather than save money.

Here's how that breaks down:

Utilities — no savings, because the county will still be paying utilities on the building.

Personnel — a projected savings of about \$99,980 represents the reduction of two professional positions and half of a service position. It is important to note that Harman School personnel have seniority, which means they would be shifted to other buildings. This results in lower-salaried employees being cut instead, so the savings are not as significant as they first appear.

Maintenance — no savings, because the county would still need to maintain the building.

Transportation — added expenses, including \$2,500 in bonus depreciation, \$29,131 for a new bus driver's salary, and \$10,082.66 in fuel costs.

Other costs — no savings, because these follow the students.

Additionally, the county would lose the \$100,000 provided under Senate Bill 300, which is specifically allocated for Harman School. When all of these factors are combined, the district would face a net loss of approximately \$41,733.66 if Harman were to close. In other words, closing Harman would not result in financial savings — it would actually cost more.

These numbers clearly show that keeping Harman School open is the fiscally responsible decision for our district and our community. Thank you for your time and consideration."

Chuck Coffman, a veteran bus driver for Randolph County Schools, spoke about transportation safety and his decades of experience driving students across the county.

"Good evening, everyone. I've been to almost all of these meetings, either in person or listening in. I've been driving a bus in this county for thirty years. I've been all over this county and all across these mountains, and I understand the concerns of everyone involved. Nobody wants to see their school closed down.

Like I said, I've driven for thirty years, and I've never, in those thirty years, seen a child seriously injured on a school bus. Have we had buses go into ditches with kids on them? Yes, we have. I personally have been in the ditch one time in my career with children on my school bus, but no one was hurt — and I thank God for that.

I have never seen a serious injury in this county. I've trained our bus drivers for sixteen years. I do my best to train our bus operators — our up-and-coming drivers and our substitutes — to the best of my ability and to the best of theirs, so that they can be safe and efficient bus operators.

I drive out of North Elementary and have for most of my career. I like the area; it's my home area where I grew up. I don't have any issues transporting our children from North Elementary to Jennings Randolph.

I just want to say, on behalf of the Jennings Randolph staff, I know they will welcome those children with open arms into their school. Thank you for your time."

April Coffman, a staff member at Jennings Randolph Elementary, spoke about the school's welcoming environment and its readiness to support incoming students if the closures move forward.

"So, I'm kind of speaking on the fly tonight. I had no intention of coming up here and speaking, but I do want to speak on behalf of Jennings Randolph Elementary and our staff.

We welcomed Harman several years ago when they had to come over here because of furnace issues — or maybe it was the ceiling, I can't quite remember at the time — but we welcomed that staff and those children with open arms.

If the closures happen again, I just want people to know that we are a caring staff. We love our kids, and we put them first in everything we do. We're a showcase school, and we will love those new students just the same as we do the ones we have now. Thank you."

Allison Cooper, a student from Harman School, shared a brief statement asking the Board to keep the school open.

"Hi. Please keep Harman. We've been working really hard on our test scores. We love our community and don't want to deal with extremely long bus rides. I do not think it's the right decision to close us. Thank you."

Brad Smith, Director of Finance for Randolph County Schools, addressed the Board regarding the budget, financial impact of the proposed closures, and clarification on how facility and personnel costs were calculated in the closure documents.

"So what you need to look at in these closure documents, as far as the finances go, is that we are asked to show the annual current cost of all five affected facilities. That's the current cost based on FY25. The state also asked me to include transportation costs, and the easiest way to do that is on a per-pupil basis based on the number of students in each school. We take the total transportation expenses, divide them by the student count, and that gives us a per-student amount.

We also calculate maintenance salaries the same way to determine the annual maintenance cost at each school. Then, I'm asked to determine an anticipated annual cost after action — meaning after consolidation. You'll see in the documents that for the three receiving schools, I placed increases in utility costs because more students will be there — more toilets flushing, more sinks running — so utilities did in fact increase at those schools. The same applies to maintenance, transportation, and the 'other' category. All those items were increased at the specific receiving locations.

As far as personnel goes, the total savings was based upon the state's average cost for a professional. I did not look at who was most tenured or who was most senior. I used what the Department of Education provided for our personnel average, which is roughly \$77,000 per professional. I don't recall the exact number for service personnel, but I believe it's in the \$50,000 range. We anticipate that if, for example, we currently have four third-grade classes across the schools being closed and will consolidate to two or three, then we would eliminate one or two positions. Using the \$77,000 average per position helps estimate the anticipated personnel savings. None of these figures have anything to do with individual employees or years of experience — everything is based on averages.

You'll notice in the net cost or savings section that the net savings on utilities between the two closing facilities is about \$147,000. For comparison, my own household water bill is around \$150 a month when occupied; when it's not, it drops to about \$40.

Similarly, those empty facilities — even if retained — won't operate at the same rate they do now.

The personnel savings are tied to positions being reduced, both service and professional. For maintenance, I simply netted the amount. In transportation, even in tonight's documents, you'll see a negative number, which represents an anticipated increase in cost. That's why I listed transportation as a negative — we do expect costs to rise.

The 'other' category includes child nutrition, textbooks, and other items that follow students; there's no savings there. You'll also see a net loss of \$100,000 — that's the funding we'll lose if a school closes.

That's all accounted for. I'm just trying to make sure the numbers are clear and accurate for everyone."

Superintendent Dr. Shawn Dilly added further clarification regarding the budget process and personnel data.

"I just want to make sure everyone understands the flow of the documents and the mindset behind these calculations. There's been a lot of discussion about the use of average salaries, so I want to explain why we use averages and how the certified list ties into that.

To clarify another point that's come up — some people have mentioned that more senior employees being moved might affect savings. The reimbursement related to the certified list happens regardless of which building an employee works in, so there's no savings or loss tied to that. Savings occur only when an actual position is reduced.

The certified list was just submitted today. I haven't yet reviewed the final numbers, but that list takes into account teachers' degrees and years of experience, such as a teacher with a Master's +45 and 35 years of service. Those factors determine the average reimbursement amount the state provides for employees each year. So while we do have higher-salaried employees, the state provides reimbursement to offset that through the certified list process.

Using averages is simply the most accurate and manageable way to calculate these estimates. Personnel season each year is complex — certification levels, years of experience, retirements, and resignations all come into play. We know there will be people who retire, people who leave the county, and some positions that may be reduced. Using an average helps us fairly project costs across all those potential changes.

And yes, the main reason we rely on averages is because, as you all know from participating in personnel seasons over the years, they are very complex. There are many moving parts depending on certification and years of service, which makes it difficult to anticipate every single movement that will occur. Some employees will retire, some may transfer, and others may face reductions in force. The average is the most reliable number to work from because it reflects both higher- and lower-salaried employees.

Any questions from the Board?"

President Burns asked if there were any additional comments or questions from the Board regarding Section Four.

Hearing none, she stated, "That concludes Section Four. The section was closed at 7:50 p.m."

"Anything else from the Board?" she added.

She then continued, "Up next, we will have the public hearing for Elkins Middle School as the receiving school for Harman K-12 at eight o'clock. We'll go ahead and put up the sign-up sheet and resume at 8:00 p.m."

## **5. Public Hearing for Elkins Middle School a receiving school for Harman K-12 School 8:00 P.M.**

President Burns called the meeting back to order at 8:00 p.m. following a short recess.

"Since Elkins Middle School is the receiving school for Harman K-12, this will be Section Five," she announced. "Can I get a motion to get that on the table?"

Motion to Open: A. Hearing for Elkins Middle School as a receiving school for the closure of Harman K-12 School

Motion by Philip Chua, Seconded by Sherri Collett

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Philip Chua, Charles Daniels

President Burns confirmed, "All right, we have one person signed up to speak — Ms. Trish Bucher."

Trish Bucher, speaking on behalf of community members, shared her closing thoughts and urged the Board to delay any final decisions regarding the proposed school closures.

"Good evening again. This is my last-ditch effort, I'm sure.

Initially, this call to a closure vote was based on the context that the budget was not balanced and the state wanted to see progress. Ladies and gentlemen, we have balanced our budget — with a three percent surplus. Let us celebrate that. We do not need to go any further with these proceedings.

Let us now band together with the community. We have Mr. Piranha, who has proposed some meetings for the community where we can come together and find solutions. Let's see what we can accomplish as one. Making any decisions today, with inaccurate figures on the impact statement, is not necessary. We can take time to review and explore different options.

Many have offered their services to approach legislators — let us use these very valuable resources and see what we can accomplish. It has been emphasized that declining enrollment is not just a Randolph County problem; it is a nationwide issue. The legislature sees this, and things can change.

There is no need for any rash decisions today. Let us take our time, talk with our community, work together, and see what we can accomplish. Thank you so much."

After public comment concluded, Vice President Janie Newlon asked whether the Board could consider tabling the vote.

Dr. Shawn Dilly responded, "Tabling the vote does not alter the required timeline. The timeline remains the same regardless of whether the vote is tabled or not."

President Burns then asked if there were any additional comments or questions from the Board.

Hearing none, she thanked everyone for their time and participation in the hearing.

"Thank you to everyone who spoke and attended this evening. We appreciate the thoughtful comments and the time you've taken to share your perspectives with us."

Section Five, *Public Hearing for Elkins Middle School as the Receiving School for Harman K-12*, was closed at 8:18 p.m.

## **6. Public Hearing for Elkins High School a receiving school for Harman K-12 School 8:30 P.M.**

Discussion, Information, Procedural: A. Hearing for Elkins High School a receiving school for Harman K-12 School

President Burns called the meeting back to order at 8:18 p.m. following the conclusion of the previous hearing.

"As the receiving school for Harman K-12, we will now begin the public hearing for Elkins High School," she announced. "Can I get a motion to put Section Six on the table?"

Motion to Open: A. Hearing for Elkins High School a receiving school for Harman K-12 School

Motion by Sherri Collett, Seconded by Janie Newlon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Philip Chua, Charles Daniels

President Burns confirmed, "All right, we have one person signed up to speak — Mr. Seth Blake."

Seth Blake, a teacher at Elkins High School, spoke about the school's commitment to welcoming all incoming Harman students.

"Good evening. As a teacher at Elkins High School, I just want to say that our staff and students are ready to welcome the Harman students with open arms. We are a caring and supportive school community, and we're dedicated to making sure that every student who joins us feels comfortable, valued, and included.

Our goal is to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible and that all students — both current and incoming — have the same opportunities for success. We're excited to have them become part of the Elkins High family."

Justin Murray spoke next on Harman high school students going to Elkins High School.

"Good evening. I just want to speak briefly about the proposed closure of Harman K-12 and the merging of those high school students into Elkins High School.

Change is never easy, especially when it involves schools and communities that people care deeply about. But I believe that if this merger moves forward, our focus must be on ensuring that every student from Harman feels supported and welcomed at Elkins High.

These students will be joining a new environment, and it's up to all of us — the staff, administration, and community — to make sure that transition is positive. We want them to know that they are part of the same Randolph County family and that their education and opportunities will continue to grow here.

This is a chance to come together as one district, one community, and to make sure every student has access to the best resources and programs we can provide. Thank you."

Superintendent Dr. Shawn Dilly responded to the questions and addressed the public comments.

"For the Elkins High School numbers, there are roughly thirty high school students from Harman who would be coming here. Currently, the enrollment at Elkins High is seven hundred and twenty-three students, and this building was built for about twelve hundred students in the building.

To answer a broader question about personnel — if these closures are approved, there will be a significant personnel process that follows, involving what's referred to as two personnel seasons. I'll use North Elementary as an example for clarity. If North is approved for closure and those students move to Jennings Randolph, the state code requires us to hold what's called a priority vote. We have two employee groups — professional staff, which includes teachers, and service personnel. After a closure is approved, both groups are given ballots to determine whether employees from the closed school will be given preference for any new or additional positions created at the receiving school due to the influx of students.

If the vote passes, those employees from the closing school have the first opportunity, by seniority, to move into those new positions. For example, if new elementary positions open at Jennings, the most senior teacher from North Elementary would have the first choice, assuming they're certified for that grade level. The same process applies to service personnel, such as cooks or aides, following seniority order.

However, this does not mean that every employee from the closing school is automatically placed. Once the priority vote process is completed, we proceed into the regular personnel season — and positions are then reviewed according to certification, seniority, and staffing needs across the county.

This process is required under state code 18-4-8, which governs the procedures for staff reassignment, reductions, and transfers during consolidations. It ensures fairness and transparency in how staff are placed following a closure.

To give some context, I met with administrators about this earlier and also held a virtual meeting this week with teachers in Fayette County who are going through similar consolidations. We walked them through both the priority vote and the subsequent personnel season so they could understand what comes next.

And I want to emphasize — this process is based on state law, not something unique to Randolph County. It's designed to give staff clarity, ensure fairness, and allow input through voting.

No matter what happens, I'll continue to participate and answer questions from staff and administrators throughout this process. I fully recognize the impact this has on employees, students, and the community."

After the final public comment, President Burns asked if there were any additional questions or remarks from the Board regarding Section Six.

Hearing none, she thanked the speakers and attendees for their time and participation.

"Thank you to everyone who spoke and shared your thoughts this evening. We appreciate your comments and the respect shown throughout the hearing."

Section Six, *Public Hearing for Elkins High School as the Receiving School for Harman K-12*, was closed at 8:35 p.m.

President Burns noted that the Board would proceed to the next item on the agenda following a brief pause to prepare materials.

## **7. School Closures/Policy Waivers/Amendments**

Action: A. Closure vote for Harman K-12 School - 9:00 p.m. or later on October 8, 2025.

President Burns called the meeting back to order at 8:46 p.m. following a short recess.

"If I can get a motion on Section Seven — School Closures, Policy Waivers, and Amendments — please," she said.

Motion by Sherri Collett, Seconded by Janie Newlon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries to continue on to: 7. School Closings/Policy Waivers/Admindents

President Burns confirmed, "All right, we've got a motion by Sherry and a second. Thank you."

She continued, "We're not voting on these items as a slate — we'll go through each one individually."

The Superintendent recommends approval of the closure of Harman K-12 School and the merger in Jennings Randolph Elementary School, Elkins Middle School, and Elkins High School.

Motion to: A. Closure Vote for Harman K-12 School-9:00p.m. or later on October 8, 2025

Motion by: Sherri Collett, Seconded by Janie Newlon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Sherri Collett, Janie Newlon, Philip Chua

Nay: Charles Daniels

Action: B. Closure vote for North Elementary School - 9:00 p.m. or later on October 8, 2025.

The Superintendent recommends approval of the closure of North Elementary School and merger in Jennings Randolph Elementary School.

Motion to: B. Closure Vote for North Elementary School-9:00p.m. or later on October 8, 2025.

Motion by: Sherri Collett, Seconded by Janie Newlon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Charles Daniels, Philip Chua

Action: C. Policy 4336 Waiver Request (3.2.e.2.)

The Superintendent recommends approval of the waiver to support the closure and merger of schools as voted on by the Board.

Motion to: C. Policy 4336 Waiver Request (3.2.e.2)

Motion by: Sherri Collett, Seconded by Janie Newlon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Charles Daniels, Philip Chua

Action: D. Amendment of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP)

The Superintendent recommends approval of the amendments to the CEFP to support the closure and merger of schools as voted on by the Board.

Motion to: D. Amendment of the Comprehensive Education Facilities Plan (CEFP)

Motion by: Sherri Collett, Seconded by Janie Newlon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Charles Daniels, Philip Chua

With no further items for the betterment of the board a motion to adjourn was called at 9:02 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by: Sherri Collett, Seconded by Janie Newlon

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Rachel Burns, Janie Newlon, Sherri Collett, Charles Daniels, Philip Chua



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President



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Secretary