

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

MINUTES

March 11, 2026

I. Call to Order

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mrs. Justice. Vice-President Victor L. Gabriel called the meeting of the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) to order at 9:00 a.m. on March 11, 2026, in Capitol Building 6, Suite 600, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, West Virginia.

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

II. Approval of Agenda

Vice-President Gabriel called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Rotruck moved, and Mrs. White seconded, that the agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

III. Recognitions

Erika Klose, WVDE Director of Academic Support, addressed the Board by introducing Ms. Stephanie Bishop, Vice-President of the Milken Educator Awards at the Milken Family Foundation. Ms. Bishop then recognized State Superintendent Blatt, Brooke Greene, and Christy Day for their dedication to ensuring meaningful collaboration and a thoughtful selection process in choosing the Milken Educator winner. Next, Ms. Bishop presented the Milken Educator Obelisk Award to Ms. Brooke Bailey from Mullens Elementary School. The recognition concluded with Ms. Bailey's address to the board members relating to being a teacher in a rural community school and being chosen as a Milken Educator Award winner.

IV. Delegations

Dr. Sue Westfall, Ms. Regan Quinn, Ms. Vickie Swain, and Mr. Robin Godfrey spoke in favor of holding the current school vaccination laws. Ms. Susan Parsons read from the Bible. Mr. David Gladkosky, Executive Director, West Virginia Professional Educators, spoke about Music In Our Schools Month and Mr. Mickey Blackwell, Executive Director, West Virginia Principals Association, spoke about Women's History Month and the importance of recognizing that Title IX

is what drove the existence of women's sports and encouraged everyone to attend the State Girls' Basketball Tournament.

V. School Safety Report

Mr. Micah Whitlow and Mr. James Agee provided a school safety update that included the number of threats reported and managed in February 2026, as well as the 5-step protocol utilized through the I Love You Guys Foundation to effectively manage school safety incidents.

VI. State Superintendent Reports

Superintendent Blatt informed members that their meeting packet included the following two booklets and explained the contents and purpose of each publication: 1) Targeted Support Areas, and 2) Educator Development and Certification Handbook. Finally, Superintendent Blatt recognized the Mid-Ohio Valley Technical Institute and their instructors for designing custom portfolios for board members and wooden coasters with the WVBE seal for the boardroom desk.

VII. Consent Agenda

Vice-President Gabriel called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Dunlevy moved, and Mrs. White seconded, that the Consent Agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote approving the following:

- Approved the WVBE minutes of the February 11, 2026, meeting.
- Approved the employment of substitute teachers in areas of critical need and shortage policies for Hancock, McDowell, Ritchie, and Wyoming counties.
- Approved the employment of retired bus operators as substitutes in areas of critical need and shortage policies for McDowell County.
- Approved retirement affidavits for submission to the Consolidated Public Retirement Board.
- Approved Wheeling University's Certified Teacher of Record (CTR) Agreement with Ohio County Schools.
- Approved Concord University's CTR Agreement with Morgan County Schools.
- Approved the West Virginia School Board Association's regional training schedule and agenda.

VIII. Hancock County Schools Update

Ms. Alexandra Criner, WVDE Director of Accountability, provided background information relating to the Hancock County Schools' intervention resulting from financial management issues, and then Superintendent Walt Saunders provided a progress report to the Board regarding actions taken to correct deficiencies in several key operational areas, including personnel, finance, and transportation.

IX. Upshur County Schools Update

Ms. Criner provided background information relating to the Upshur County Schools' intervention, and then County Superintendent Christy Miller provided a progress report to the Board regarding actions taken to correct identified deficiencies. Superintendent Miller announced that this would likely be her last presentation to the WVBE as the county superintendent of Upshur County Schools because she is planning to retire at the end of the year. State Superintendent Blatt and board members expressed gratitude for her willingness to step up when requested and for her unwavering commitment to students.

X. Reconveyance of West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (WVSDB) Off-Campus Barn Property.

Ms. Kelli Talbott, General Counsel, provided background information leading to the necessity of reconveying the property to the City of Romney, West Virginia. Specifically, in May 2019, the WVBE voted to convey property owned by WVSDB in Romney to the City of Romney. The property in question is off campus and is known as the barn property. A historic dairy barn formerly used by the WVSDB is situated on the property. Because the conveyance was between public entities, the Board of Public Works was required to approve it pursuant to state statute, which it did in September 2020. The deed had a condition in it that required that the City of Romney use the property for a "public use." Otherwise, the property would revert. The City of Romney is in the process of obtaining a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to construct a public pool and recreation area on the property. Although this usage is consistent with the "public use" condition in the deed, the federal grant cannot be obtained unless the City of Romney has unconditional title to the property. Therefore, the Mayor of the City of Romney and their attorney had requested that the WVBE unconditionally reconvey the property to resolve the issue. The WVBE has confirmed with the West Virginia Department of Economic Development, the entity that administers the grant at the State level, that the City of Romney must have an unconditional deed to the property to obtain the grant. Ms. Talbott also explained that once the WVBE approves the unconditional reconveyance, the matter would have to be reapproved by the Board of Public Works before reconveyance could be completed. Vice-President Gabriel called for a motion to approve the unconditional reconveyance of the WVSDB barn property to the City of Romney. Mrs. White moved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded, that the property be unconditionally reconveyed to the City of Romney. Upon a call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

XI. WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters

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

XII. WVBE Member Updates and Requests for Information

Mr. Rotruck reported that he had visited a STEAM TAC event at Lincoln School in Harrison County with West Virginia University President Michael Benson and Morgan O'Brien from Hope Gas. The event was an immersion for students considering a profession in the natural gas industry. Mr. Paul expressed gratitude to the WVDE senior officials, board staff, and members for assisting him in getting up to speed on issues and processes essential for board members and explained that his primary focus as a member would be on student outcomes and doing what is best for students.

XIII. Future Meetings

Vice-President Gabriel announced that the next regular meeting of the West Virginia Board of Education would be on April 8, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Charleston, West Virginia.

XIV. Adjournment

Vice-President Gabriel called for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. White moved, and Mr. Paul seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the call for the question, the meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m. on a voice vote.

Minutes approved by the Board on April 8, 2026

L. Paul Hardesty, President

Victor L. Gabriel, Vice President

NOTE:

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

Minutes were recorded by:

Tina Payne, Board Secretary

Tina.A.Payne@k12.wv.us

304-558-3660