

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

MINUTES

June 3, 2026

I. Call to Order

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Wooten. President L. Paul Hardesty called the meeting of the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) to order at 9:00 a.m. on June 3, 2026, in Capitol Building 6, Suite 600, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, West Virginia.

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

II. Approval of Agenda

Prior to approval of the agenda, President Hardesty announced that *Item G (Discussion of Legal Matters)* and *Item H (WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters)* would be moved to the top of the agenda under New Business. President Hardesty then called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Dunlevy moved, and Mr. Wooten seconded, that the agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

III. Delegations

Mr. Billy Reeves, Ms. Stacey Eddy, Ms. Brittany Feury, Ms. Adriana Fields, and Ms. Shelly Sopher addressed the board about student safety in public schools. Mr. Mickey Blackwell, West Virginia Principals Association, talked about the Girls' Softball Tournament and an article published by the Wallace Foundation titled The Principal Effect.

IV. School Safety Report

Mr. Micah Whitlow and Mr. James Agee provided a school safety update. First, Mr. Whitlow informed the board that he had attended the Tyler County reunification drill in May and found that it was logistically challenging. According to Mr. Whitlow, Tyler County did a great job planning, running, and debriefing the drill. He then reported that all 55 county school systems had completed the required documents for compliance with House Bill No. 3166 (2025 Regular Session), requiring school mapping. Mr. Whitlow explained that the project is now the vendor's responsibility to complete the maps. Superintendent Blatt directed Mr. Whitlow and Mr. Agee to provide an update on the hiring and investigation laws that the WVDE is required to abide by at the next meeting.

V. State Superintendent Reports

Superintendent Blatt talked about West Virginia's scores on the Harvard/Stanford University Education Scorecard. Specifically, West Virginia ranked 6th nationally in student learning growth in math and 11th

in reading. She explained that West Virginia was also highlighted in the report for decreasing chronic absenteeism from 29% in 2022 to 23% in 2025. Superintendent Blatt also informed the members that Upshur County and Superintendent Christy Miller were highlighted in the report as a District on the Rise. West Virginia had several other counties mentioned in the report as emerging as Districts on the Rise. Additionally, Superintendent Blatt reported that the WVDE has continued the Engaging Families events and submitted the winner's artwork for the state's school bus safety poster contest national competition. Additionally, Superintendent Blatt informed the Board that the National Center for Science and Public Interest on Food and Health released a report that West Virginia was the only state whose policies aligned with all the child nutrition expert recommendations for breakfast and lunch meals. Superintendent Blatt also shared that the Career Technical Education (CTE) Office was celebrated in the National CTE Magazine for techniques connecting education and careers. The article included information regarding the WVDE's partnerships with the community colleges and higher education institutions. Superintendent Blatt then answered questions from members relating to the Harvard/Stanford report.

VI. Consent Agenda

President Hardesty called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Dunlevy moved, and Mr. Wooten seconded that the Consent Agenda be approved. Prior to calling the question, President Hardesty and Mr. Paul discussed the statewide waiver process. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote approving the following:

- Approved the WVBE minutes of the April 8, 2026, meeting.
- Approved the employment of substitute teachers in areas of critical need and shortage policy for Webster County.
- Approved retirement affidavits for submission to the Consolidated Public Retirement Board.
- Approved Christian Schools International (CSI), North American Christian School Accrediting Agency (NACSAA), and Society for Classical Learning as nonpublic school accreditation organizations that meet the requirements of WVBE Policy 2330.
- Approved Monongalia County Schools' request for a waiver of WVBE Policy 4321.1, Standards for School Nutrition, to allow à la carte food sales at University High School and Morgantown High School.
- Approved Cabell County's 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP) amendment.
- Approved Lincoln County's 2020-2030 CEFP amendment.
- Approved West Virginia School Board Association (WVSBA) Orientation Training.
- Approved the appointment of Tonji Bowen and Melissa Ennis to serve on the Alternative Certification Educator Preparation Program Review Board.
- Approved the West Virginia Licensure Testing Directory.
- Approved a statewide waiver of WVBE Policy 2510, Section 5.1 relating to physical education.
- Approved Hancock County's 2020-2030 CEFP amendment.
- Approved West Virginia Wesleyan College's request for a waiver of WVBE Policy 5100, Appendix A.
- Approved the 2026 summer school programs.

- Approved a Statewide Waiver of Policy 2525, Section 5.1.b. relating to Pre-K eligibility and enrollment.
- Approved West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission (WVSSAC), Series 1, Constitution, as revised, be placed on public comment for 30 days from filing.
- Approved WVSSAC, Series 3, Provisions Governing Contests, as revised, be placed on public comment for 30 days from filing.
- Approved WVSSAC, Series 4, Provisions Governing Conduct, as revised, be placed on public comment for 30 days from filing.
- Approved WVSSAC, Series 6, Violation of Rules, as revised, be placed on public comment for 30 days from filing.
- Approved the CTE Testing and Endorsement Manual.

VII. WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters, Inclusive of Annual Evaluation of the State Superintendent of Schools and WVBE Executive Assistant/Legislative Liaison

Next, President Hardesty recognized Vice President Gabriel for a motion. Mr. Gabriel moved that the board enter into executive session under the personnel exception authorized by W. Va. Code § 6-9A-3 for discussion of *Item G (Discussion of Legal Matters)* and *Item H (WVBE/WVDE Personnel Matters)*. After being seconded by Mr. Rotruck, President Hardesty called the question, which carried on a voice vote. The Board entered executive session at 9:38 a.m.

The board returned from executive session at 10:04 a.m. Mr. Hardesty recognized Ms. Kelli Talbott, General Counsel, for a statement. In accordance with W. Va. Code §18-3-1, Ms. Talbott announced the State Superintendent had been evaluated by the board members and that a majority of the Board had given Superintendent Blatt an outstanding rating in each of the performance factors and standards. Mr. Rotruck moved that the rating for Superintendent Blatt be approved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded the motion. After a discussion clarifying how the various personnel matters would be considered, Mr. Wooten called the question. Upon a call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote. The Board returned to address the remaining personnel matters later in the meeting.

VIII. West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission (WVSSAC) Series 2, Athletics, Provisions Governing Eligibility

Mr. Wayne Ryan, Executive Director, WVSSAC, explained the revisions to the rule and that the rule needs to be filed as an emergency rule to coincide with the effective date of House Bill No. 4425 (2026 Regular Legislative Session) relating to student transfers. After which Mr. Rotruck moved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded, that the rule be approved as an emergency rule, effective upon filing on June 11, 2026, and be placed on public comment for 30 days from filing. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

IX. CTE Apprentice Program Update

Mr. Adam Canter, Director of Career Technical Education, provided information relating to the Classroom2Career Apprentice Program. Mr. Canter explained that the program is a 2.0 version of the national simulated workplace model. Specifically, students are engaged with actual business partners so that they are either employed or at least experienced in a real working environment in their career field.

Mr. Canter described how the creation of a database used as a communication tool to log all the activities in which CTE students are engaged and provides a mechanism for obtaining reportable statistics. The latest report shows that more than 2,000 students engaged with 600+ partners working more than 350,000 hours, while earning a cumulative \$5 million. Mr. Canter also updated the Board on new partnerships and additional pathways that are being created for students to be successful in the workplace.

X. Intervention Updates for Mingo, Nicholas, and Tyler Counties

Next, Ms. Alexandra Criner, Director of Accountability, informed the Board that the county superintendent would be providing the update for their respective school system. First, Dr. Joetta Basile provided information regarding the status of Mingo County Schools. Specifically, Superintendent Basile informed the Board that she has primarily focused on several key areas that directly impact instruction, including developing a county curriculum team; the creation of a model to guide processes related to student achievement, attendance, and leadership; ongoing year-long professional learning implemented to support both teaching and instructional leadership; establishing professional learning communities in every school; and, having weekly meetings designed to promote collaborative decision making. Next, Superintendent Scott Cochran provided an update on the status of Nicholas County Schools. Superintendent Cochran talked about Nicholas County's assessment results, including the fact that the scores were consistent with the national average in mathematics on the nationally normed benchmark assessment for students at or above grade level. In English Language Arts, kindergarten through second-grade students increased from 24% on the 2025 Fall benchmark to 47% above the national average on the 2026 Spring benchmark. Additionally, individual data meetings with school administrators were held to review all relevant student achievement data to assist in planning professional development for the 2026-2027 school year. To offset the loss of revenue resulting from declining enrollment, Nicholas County has eliminated 27 service and professional positions. Superintendent Cochran provided an update on several educational facilities, including the new academic complex project, which is reportedly ahead of schedule and expected to be operational for the 2027-2028 school year. Lastly, Superintendent Shane Highley provided an update on the status of Tyler County Schools. Superintendent Highley said that they have been focused on addressing all the deficiencies identified in the Special Circumstance Review Report, including revising policies; improving communications and transparency with board members and the public by starting a podcast, hosting a "Coffee with the Superintendent" event which allowed anyone to come into the office and discuss the school system with Superintendent Highley, and engaging the community in "Snow Day" videos; prioritizing transparency in excess levy discussions; participating in numerous hours of professional development and guidance trainings in a variety of topics; and, continuing to invest in school safety protocols and trainings. Superintendent Highley also provided an update on the educational facilities and academic standards designed to increase student achievement.

XI. West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (WVSDb) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Hampshire County Little League (HCLL)

Ms. Kelli Talbott provided the board with a brief history of HCLL's use of the property owned by the WVSDb and the need to approve the proposed Addendum to the MOU. After which, Mr. Dunley moved, and Mr. Rotruck seconded, that the Addendum to the MOU be approved. Upon a call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

XII. WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters, Inclusive of Annual Evaluation of the State Superintendent of Schools and WVBE Executive Assistant/Legislative Liaison

Next, the Board returned to the consideration of personnel matters. President Hardesty asked Kelli Talbott for a statement regarding the results of the evaluation for Tina Payne, Board Secretary. Ms. Talbott reported that the majority of the Board evaluated Ms. Payne as outstanding in every category of the

performance factors and standards. Mr. Rotruck moved, and Mr. Paul seconded that the statement be approved. Upon a call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote. President Hardesty called for a motion to approve the WVBE personnel matters included in the agenda attachment. Mr. Rotruck moved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded, that the WVBE personnel matters included in the agenda attachment be approved. Mr. Paul asked Superintendent Blatt to clarify the background dates on the WVSDB attachment. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote. President Hardesty then called for a motion to approve the WVDE personnel matters included in the agenda attachment. Mr. Gabriel moved, and Mr. Dunlevy 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

Dr. Paul requested that Superintendent Blatt provide information relating to what schools are planning to participate in America 250 and what can be done to encourage them to participate. He reported that he also attended the West Virginia Virtual Academy's High School Graduation Ceremony at the Clay Center. Mr. Rotruck reported that he attended the graduation ceremony at Suncrest Elementary School in Morgantown and had chaired the board meeting of the West Virginia Public Education Collaborative at West Virginia University. Chancellor Tucker said they had just celebrated their 7th cohort of the Underwood Smith Teacher Scholars, a scholarship program for 25 students annually who want to move on to the teaching profession and commit to working in the public school system for five years after graduation. Each scholar receives \$10,000 per year toward their tuition, fees, and other necessities. Mrs. Justice reported that she visited Huff Consolidated Middle School, where a group of students competed and won \$100,000 for their water purification project, and attended an awards ceremony at Greenbrier West High School. Mr. Gabriel reported that he attended the West Virginia Association of School Administrators meeting. President Hardesty directed staff to ensure that the July meeting agenda included an item to establish Superintendent Goals for School Year 2026-2027. President Hardesty also reported that he visited Chapmanville Primary School and, after going through the proper channels to ensure that he was entering the school according to security protocols, a teacher's aide didn't recognize him and stopped him for questions. President Hardesty commended her for doing such a great job of protecting the school.

XIII. Future Meetings

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

XIV. Adjournment

President Hardesty called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Rotruck moved, and Mr. Gabriel seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the call for the question, the meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m. on a voice vote.

Minutes approved by the Board on July 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