



2025–2026

Superintendent Goals & Accomplishments Report

June 2026





**West Virginia Board of Education
2025-2026**

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Executive Summary

The 2025–2026 school year marked a period of measurable progress, strategic systems improvement, and strengthened statewide collaboration under the leadership of Superintendent Michele L. Blatt. Guided by four strategic goals established in partnership with the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE), the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) remained focused on improving student achievement, strengthening accountability systems, supporting middle-grade learners, and expanding pathways to address educator workforce shortages.

Throughout the year, the WVDE pursued an intentional and coordinated approach to educational improvement through collaboration among agency offices, county school systems, educators, institutions of higher education, business and industry partners, and community organizations. These efforts contributed to measurable gains in student outcomes, strengthened district support systems, and increased opportunities for students and educators across West Virginia.

The work completed during the 2025–2026 school year not only reflects progress toward individual goals, but also a broader commitment to building sustainable systems that improve educational outcomes for all students while strengthening West Virginia’s educational workforce and future economic vitality.

Goal 1: Increase student achievement in Reading, Math, and Workplace Readiness through a multi-tiered system of support for districts and identified schools utilizing the STRIVE network

A central priority of the Superintendent’s 2025–2026 goals focused on increasing student achievement in reading, mathematics, and workplace readiness through a multi-tiered system of support utilizing the STRIVE network. Through coordinated implementation of statewide literacy, numeracy, behavioral, and instructional supports, West Virginia continued to demonstrate meaningful progress in student learning and recovery.

West Virginia received significant national recognition for academic recovery efforts following pandemic-related learning disruptions. National analyses identified West Virginia as ranking sixth nationally in mathematics recovery and eighth nationally in reading recovery, demonstrating the effectiveness of statewide investments in instructional supports and student interventions. Additionally, West Virginia was recognized as one of only four states nationally to improve third-grade English Language Arts proficiency for three consecutive years, signaling sustained progress in foundational literacy outcomes.

Student performance data reflected this progress statewide. English Language Arts proficiency increased from 45.08% to 47.55%, with 52 of 55 counties demonstrating improvement and 30 counties meeting or exceeding growth targets. Mathematics proficiency similarly increased from 35.54% to 37.98%, with 48 counties improving and 26 meeting growth targets. At the same time, overall statewide growth in Grades 3–8 reading and mathematics continued to improve over multiple years, demonstrating both immediate recovery and long-term momentum.

The WVDE further strengthened supports through the continued evolution of the STRIVE network, which has become an increasingly effective model for differentiated district and school assistance.

Through STRIVE, the WVDE enhanced regional collaboration, aligned supports to district-specific needs, and expanded implementation of tiered academic, behavioral, and mental health interventions. Literacy, numeracy, and behavioral specialists were strategically leveraged to provide targeted supports while building district capacity for long-term success. Additionally, all 55 county school systems utilized literacy and numeracy teams to support implementation of the Third Grade Success Act and statewide instructional priorities.

Workplace readiness outcomes also demonstrated progress during the year. Career technical education initiatives continued to expand opportunities for students to engage in authentic, industry-aligned experiences through programs such as Simulated Workplace and emerging workforce pathways. Statewide workplace readiness assessment performance improved, with NOCTI assessment scores increasing by four percent, while new initiatives such as HOPE Pathways and the Aviation Pathway expanded opportunities for students to engage in high-demand career sectors aligned with West Virginia's economic priorities.

Additionally, the WVDE maintained a strong focus on supporting students with disabilities and vulnerable student populations through integrated efforts across the Offices of Special Education, Academic Support, Federal Programs, and district leadership teams. Statewide STRIVE events, technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, and specialized instructional supports contributed to improved access to high-quality instruction and evidence-based interventions designed to improve academic outcomes for all students.

Goal 2: Improve accountability system metrics to better analyze and predict district issues to provide proactive technical assistance

Recognizing the importance of proactive intervention and responsive support, the WVDE continued efforts to strengthen accountability systems and improve the ability to identify district needs before challenges become barriers to student success.

During the 2025–2026 school year, multiple WVDE offices enhanced monitoring systems, refined accountability metrics, and strengthened risk-assessment protocols to support more strategic technical assistance efforts. Through the Office of ESEA Improvement and Support, technical assistance systems were redesigned to provide differentiated supports aligned to district and school needs, enabling earlier intervention and stronger alignment between federal resources and district priorities. Diagnostic reporting tools, implementation protocols, and leadership supports further enhanced districts' ability to implement evidence-based practices designed to improve student outcomes.

Similarly, the Office of Child Nutrition strengthened accountability systems through enhanced monitoring of compliance indicators, financial stability, participation trends, and operational practices to allow earlier identification of district concerns and more proactive assistance. The Office of Special Education implemented supplemental accountability structures emphasizing fiscal responsibility, instructional quality, dispute resolution trends, and Least Restrictive Environment concerns to ensure districts receive timely support and intervention when needed.

Collectively, these efforts strengthened the WVDE's ability to anticipate challenges, target resources strategically, and support districts in ways that are timely, differentiated, and responsive to local needs.

Goal 3: Finalize a comprehensive plan for middle schools to address the decline in achievement including an expansion of CTE opportunities and specific resources to address the middle learner

Recognizing the unique developmental and academic needs of middle-grade learners, Superintendent Blatt prioritized the development of a comprehensive middle school plan designed to improve achievement, strengthen student engagement, and expand opportunities for career exploration.

During the 2025–2026 school year, the WVDE finalized a statewide middle school framework focused on improving student achievement, strengthening school culture, expanding career-connected learning opportunities, and enhancing leadership capacity among principals and educators. The initiative reflects an understanding that middle school represents a pivotal period in student development and requires intentional structures that support academic success, belonging, and long-term engagement.

The middle school initiative incorporates expanded career technical education opportunities, stronger vertical alignment between elementary, middle, and high school pathways, enhanced student supports, principal leadership development, and improved instructional practices. Through statewide listening sessions, professional learning opportunities, strategic partnerships, and integrated regional supports through STRIVE, the WVDE established the foundation for a more comprehensive and responsive middle grades experience statewide.

Goal 4: Expand the Grow Your Own (GYO) Pathway by including the addition of a special education pathway and other alternative certification routes to address the shortages in the public school system

Addressing educator shortages remained a critical statewide priority throughout the year. In response, the WVDE continued to expand the Grow Your Own (GYO) educator pathway to reduce barriers to entry, increase flexibility, and strengthen long-term educator recruitment and retention.

The WVDE expanded pathways into the profession by strengthening alternative certification options, residency-based programs, online certification opportunities, and educator development supports. Significant emphasis was placed on increasing pathways for special education educators, including a special education cohort within the GYO WV Paraprofessional Academy and fast-tracked teacher preparation opportunities developed in partnership with higher education institutions. At the same time, the state expanded Registered Teacher Apprenticeship opportunities and strengthened articulation pathways for Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teachers (ECCATs), further broadening opportunities for aspiring educators.

Through collaboration with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, institutions of higher education, county school systems, and workforce partners, the WVDE strengthened a sustainable educator pipeline designed to better meet workforce demands while ensuring students across West Virginia have access to highly qualified educators.

Looking Ahead: Building on Progress and Priorities for 2026–2027

The progress achieved during the 2025–2026 school year established stronger systems of support, expanded opportunities for students and educators, and strengthened statewide collaboration in service of West Virginia’s schools and communities. Through intentional investments in literacy and numeracy, workplace readiness, accountability systems, middle grades redesign, and educator workforce development, the West Virginia Department of Education strengthened both immediate outcomes and long-term statewide capacity.

While meaningful progress has been achieved, the WVDE recognizes that continued improvement requires sustained focus, innovation, and responsiveness to emerging educational needs. The work undertaken during the 2025–2026 school year provides a strong foundation for continued advancement in student achievement, educator development, and future readiness.

As West Virginia looks toward the 2026–2027 school year, Superintendent Michele L. Blatt proposes continued emphasis on accelerating student outcomes, strengthening educator workforce pipelines, advancing innovation, and expanding partnerships that improve opportunities for students across the Mountain State. The following strategic goals reflect the continuation and evolution of the work already underway.

2026–2027 Superintendent Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Enhance Student Achievement, Support, and Accountability

Strategic Focus: Enhance student achievement by focusing on reading, mathematics, attendance, behavior, and workplace readiness through the continued implementation of coordinated systems of support, literacy and numeracy initiatives, targeted interventions, and strengthened accountability measures designed to proactively identify district needs and improve student outcomes.

Key Areas of Emphasis

- Literacy and numeracy acceleration
- Attendance and behavioral supports
- Workplace readiness and student success indicators
- STRIVE implementation and differentiated district support
- Strengthened accountability and proactive intervention systems

Goal 2: Advance Innovation and Future Readiness

Strategic Focus: Advance innovative, technology-driven learning opportunities for students and educators through strategic partnerships, professional learning, computer science, artificial intelligence, digital literacy, and workforce-aligned credentialing to strengthen post-graduation readiness and future success.

Key Areas of Emphasis

- Artificial Intelligence integration
- Computer Science and digital literacy
- Technology-enabled instructional practices
- Workforce-aligned credentialing opportunities
- Innovative professional learning for educators

Goal 3: Elevate Partnerships, Community Engagement, and Workforce Sustainability

Strategic Focus: Elevate partnerships and engagement among education, business, higher education, government, families, and community stakeholders to expand student opportunities, improve outcomes, strengthen alignment between education and workforce needs, and support educator recruitment, retention, leadership development, and workforce sustainability across West Virginia schools.

Key Areas of Emphasis

- Business and industry partnerships
- Higher education collaboration
- Family and community engagement
- Educator recruitment and retention
- Leadership development and workforce sustainability

Goal 4: Expand Middle Grades and Career Readiness

Strategic Focus: Expand and evaluate a comprehensive middle-grades improvement strategy focused on increasing student achievement, strengthening engagement, broadening career exploration opportunities, and addressing the unique academic and developmental needs of middle school learners.

Key Areas of Emphasis

- Middle grades redesign and implementation
- Student engagement and school culture
- Career exploration and CTE alignment
- Whole child supports
- Developmentally responsive middle-grades practices



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