

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE

ON-SITE REVIEW REPORT

Wyoming County Schools

August 2026



Office of Accountability



West Virginia Board of Education
2026-2027

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Introduction

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Office of Accountability conducted a Special Circumstance Review of Wyoming County Schools, beginning June 4, 2026, to examine compliance with laws and policies affecting student, school, and county performance; to review concerns identified through complaints, monitoring, or other credible information; and to verify the accuracy and effectiveness of systems, procedures, and data reported by the school or county.

The review process was conducted consistent with W. Va. Code §18-2E-5 and West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2322: West Virginia System of Support and Accountability. The review included interviews with school and central office personnel, review of documents submitted to the Office of Accountability, analysis of available data, and other review activities necessary to determine the extent to which local systems support compliance, student safety, effective leadership, and continuous improvement.

Executive Summary

The Special Circumstance Review identified systemic concerns in governance, central office leadership, personnel practices, and fiscal management that require prompt corrective action, consistent documentation, and sustained WVDE monitoring. The highest-priority concerns involve board meeting procedures and public transparency, inconsistent leadership communication and strategic implementation, gaps in personnel investigation documentation, and financial practices that require stronger internal controls and long-range planning.

The corrective actions in this report are designed to establish clear ownership, timelines, evidence requirements, and monitoring expectations to support compliance, improve governance, and strengthen district-level systems affecting students, staff, and public accountability.

On-site Review Team Members

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Background

Wyoming County Schools operates 14 schools, including 3 elementary, 5 elementary-middle, 3 middle, 2 high, and 1 career and technical education center, serving approximately 3,133 students during the 2025-2026 school year. Mr. John Henry has served as the superintendent of Wyoming County Schools since July 1, 2024. On July 1, 2026, two new board of education members were sworn in to serve on the Wyoming County Board of Education.

Figure 1 below shows the enrollment trend for Wyoming County Schools from the 2018-2019 school year through the 2025-2026 school year, based on data certified by Wyoming County Schools.

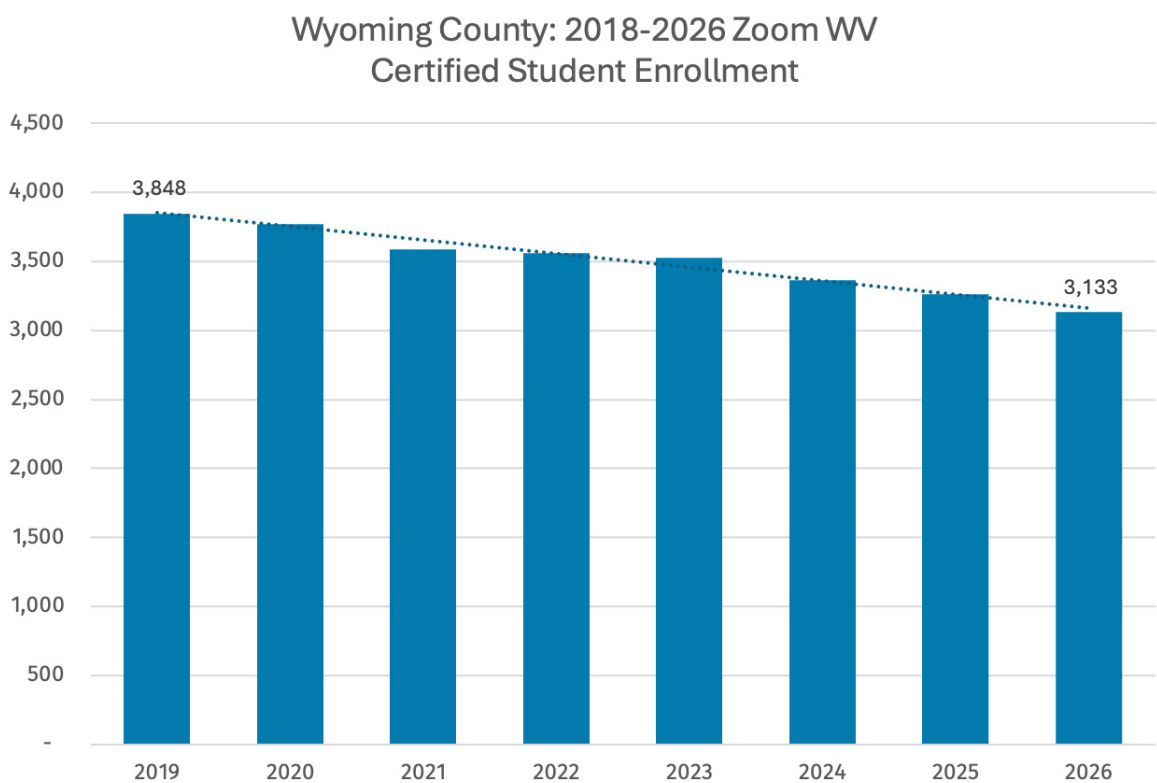


Figure 1

Wyoming County Schools’ proficiency rates in Mathematics and English Language Arts for the 2024-2025 school year are listed in Figure 2 (Mathematics) and Figure 3 (Reading) below. These results are the most recent available, as the General Summative Assessment results for the 2025-2026 school year have not been finalized.

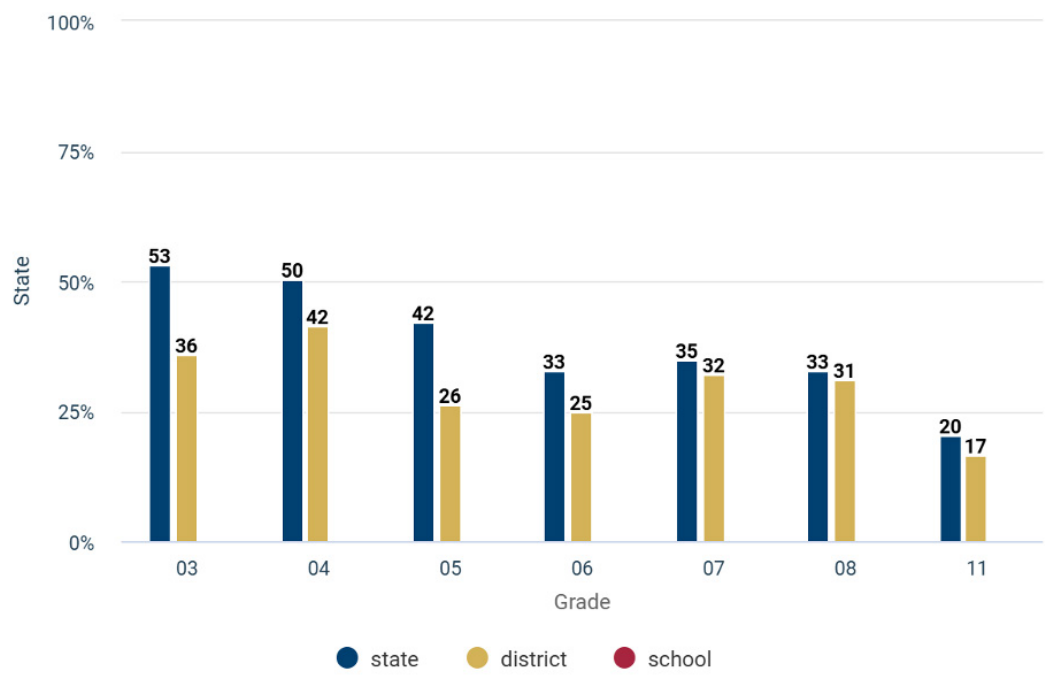


Figure 2 — Mathematics

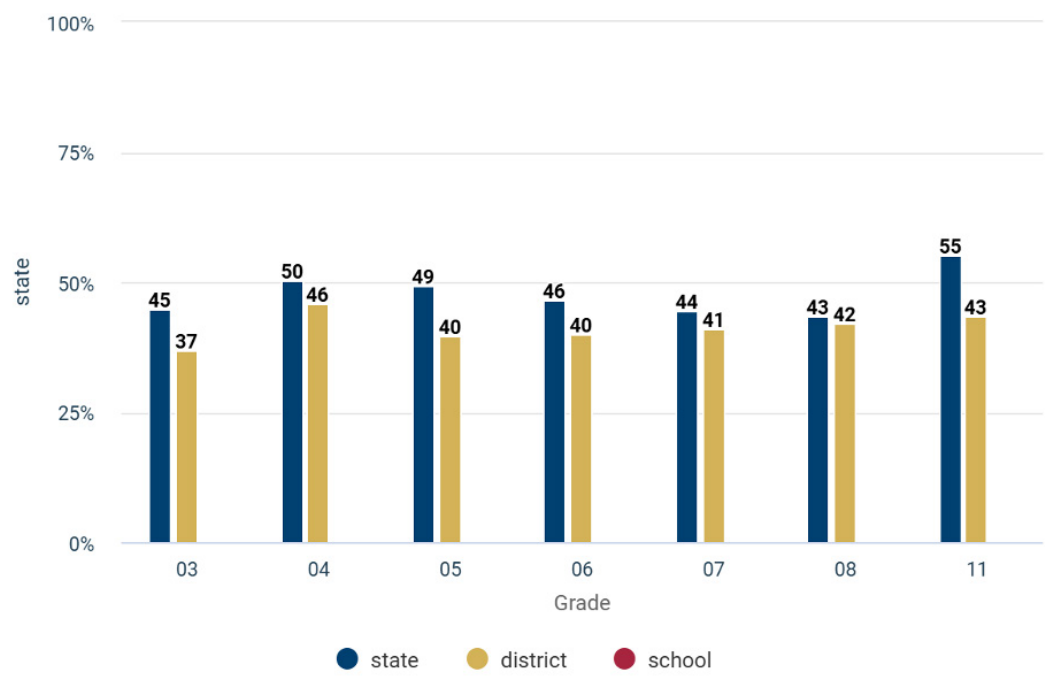


Figure 3 — Reading

Key Findings and Systemic Concerns

County Board of Education Member Effectiveness

- The review identified governance concerns related to meeting notice, agenda specificity, executive session documentation, meeting decorum, recording reliability, and the accuracy of public records.
- These concerns indicate the need for clearer board procedures, consistent documentation practices, and strengthened adherence to established governance requirements.
- Board agendas were not posted in advance for nine meetings during the 2025-2026 school year, indicating potential noncompliance with WVBE Policy 2322: West Virginia System of Support and Accountability, W. Va. Code §6-9A-4, W. Va. Code §6-9A-9, and Wyoming County Schools Policy 0164: Notice of Meetings.
- During the May 4, 2026, meeting, two board members engaged in a verbal dispute lasting approximately six minutes. The board members continued to argue after the president gaveled two separate times. The lack of decorum displayed resulted in public complaints to the WVDE Office of Accountability from stakeholders. Additionally, the audio feed was muted for approximately two minutes during this dispute, preventing a full assessment of the exchange.
- During the July 6, 2026, organizational meeting, the Superintendent recommended that the board enter executive session based on “W. Va. Code §6-9A-4(b)(2)(A) to consider matters arising from the appointment of a public officer or prospective public officer, to discuss your organization of the board, in which you’ll make no decisions, but some discussion you may have surrounding it.” Following the 18-minute executive session, the superintendent asked for nominations for the office of president, vice president, and committee appointments, which were all unanimous votes with no discussion.
- Irregularities were identified in publicly available board meeting livestream recordings that affect the completeness and reliability of the official record. During the August 18, 2025, meeting, a community member addressed the board regarding the cell phone policy. The individual continued to interact with the board beyond the standard delegation process, and board members responded during the exchange. Portions of the recording contain increased playback speed and unintelligible audio while the individual was speaking. At the end of the meeting, the board entered executive session to discuss “personnel,” although the personnel agenda had already been approved.
- During the November 13, 2025, meeting, a portion of the recording appears altered, with increased playback speed during a board member’s comments, limiting accurate interpretation.
- During an interview with the superintendent, he indicated a board meeting was conducted in May 2026, during which training occurred; however, no agenda was posted, and the meeting was not livestreamed or recorded, raising additional concerns regarding compliance with open meetings requirements.
- During the April 13, 2026, board meeting, a delegation discussed details relative to student behavior and personnel without intervention from the board president or superintendent. The board voted to convene an executive session with the delegation to discuss matters that were not listed on the meeting agenda.

- During some meetings, executive session procedures were not clearly defined or consistently documented based on available records. In these instances, the reasons for entering executive session were not clearly documented in the meeting minutes or announced during the meetings.
- Board meeting agendas reviewed lacked sufficient detail to clearly identify matters scheduled for discussion or action, limiting transparency for the public and stakeholders.
- The letter regarding the superintendent's evaluation currently posted on the district's website is from 2021 and presents the evaluation of a former superintendent. Although the board conducted an evaluation of the current superintendent in June 2025 and documented the results in meeting minutes, the letter on the website has not been updated and is now outdated.

Central Office Leadership

- The Office of Accountability initially scheduled an on-site monitoring visit for May 19, 2026. Based on information received indicating that staff may have been asked to prepare for interview questions in advance of the visit, the Office of Accountability reevaluated the monitoring approach and conducted an unannounced Special Circumstance Review to support the reliability of interview responses and related evidence.
- The district Title IX webpage contains outdated information identifying the current superintendent as an "Assistant Superintendent of Support Services." Based on the federal requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 106.8, school districts are required to provide accurate contact information for their designated Title IX Coordinator(s), including the individual's name or title, office address, email address, and telephone number. An inaccurate title could create confusion regarding who is serving in the Title IX role and whether the listed contact information is current.
- The superintendent identified broad district priorities, including growth, secondary education, workforce preparation, and career technical education; however, no implementation plan was provided. Interview responses and available documentation indicate an inconsistent system-level focus on instructional improvement, strategic direction, and the organizational conditions needed to support student learning. WVBE Policy 5800 requires education leaders, particularly superintendents, to maintain a primary focus on advancing student learning and establishing the organizational conditions necessary for effective instructional practice.
- Interview responses indicated inconsistent collaborative leadership practices, including canceled cabinet and principal meetings, limited rescheduling, and variable opportunities for district leaders to participate in decisions affecting instruction, staffing, and operations.
- Interview responses indicated limited access to the superintendent and inconsistent participation in strategic planning and curriculum meetings, contributing to communication and coordination concerns across the district.
- Interview responses indicated that, after the initial on-site monitoring visit was announced, a discipline matrix was developed without documented stakeholder input and posted on the county website before the planned visit.

- The elimination of the director position responsible for support and implementation of the Third-Grade Success Act occurred without collaboration with the district leadership team or a formal transition plan. This resulted in unclear roles and responsibilities and a diminished capacity to provide consistent instructional support, increasing the risk of ineffective or inconsistent implementation of the requirements of House Bill 3035.

Finance and Purchasing

- Figure 4 illustrates the number and associated cost of personnel in excess of the positions funded through the Public School Support Program (PSSP) in Wyoming County Schools. The graph also reflects the estimated cost of personnel positions not funded through excess levy revenues. It is important to note that the personnel funding amounts included in Wyoming County's excess levy calls represent estimated collections. Actual levy revenues often exceed these estimates due to increases in assessed property values and other factors, allowing counties to support a greater portion of personnel costs with excess levy funds than is reflected in this analysis.

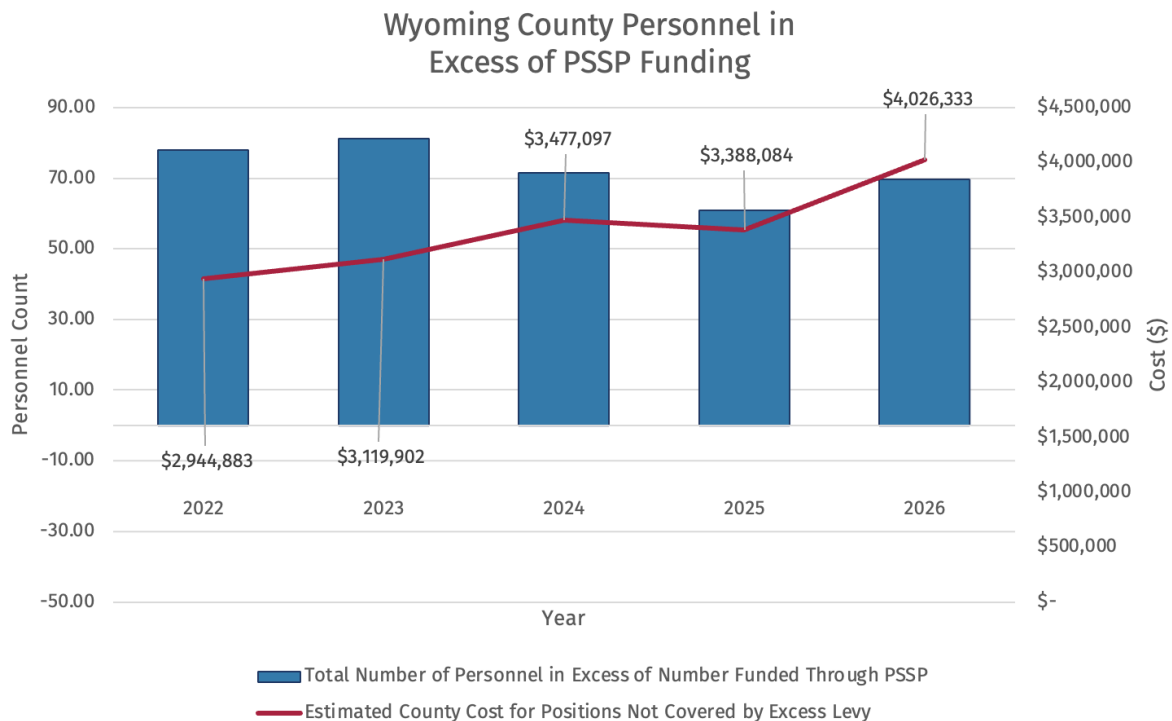


Figure 4

- A financial analysis completed by the WVDE Office of School Finance reports Wyoming County Schools employed personnel in excess of the PSSP funding formula by 59.659 positions in fiscal year 2025 (FY25) and 68.359 positions in fiscal year 2026 (FY26). The WVDE Office of School Finance estimates that the excess levy supports approximately 20 professional and 15 service positions.
- Interview responses indicated that Reduction in Force (RIF) and transfer decisions are not consistently developed through a documented strategic or collaborative process.
- A review of the prior two audit reports indicates that the district received zero findings and an unmodified clean opinion in FY24 and FY25. Additionally, the district was identified as a low-risk auditee by the audit firm.

- Interview responses and document review identified concerns regarding consistency in procurement practices, including the use of informal discussions during purchasing-related decision-making.
- Interview responses identified concerns regarding financial management practices, including budget changes communicated without sufficient explanation or documented collaboration. Central office staff indicated that their understanding of budget allocations sometimes changed after communication from the Chief School Business Official (CSBO) and finance office, resulting in unexpected increases or decreases in available funds. In several cases, staff reported being notified that funds were nearing expiration and required immediate expenditure. Documentation from the WVDE Office of Federal Programs shows that, as of June 5, 2026, the district had more than \$590,000 in unspent federal funds set to expire in September 2026.
- The table below presents per-pupil expenditure data by school from 2018 through 2025 and provides context for reviewing spending patterns across Wyoming County Schools.

Per-pupil Expenditure Data for Wyoming County Schools								
School Name	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Baileysville Elementary & Middle	11,975.85	12,615.23	12,931.00	13,236.70	14,785.19	15,351.30	18,314.37	17,242.96
Berlin McKinney Elementary	11,995.65	12,666.68	12,735.21	14,169.35	15,193.28	15,352.70	16,803.68	17,089.63
Glen Fork Elementary & Middle	12,535.63	14,029.31	13,098.93	14,748.23	14,493.94	14,980.55	17,723.13	18,315.61
Herndon Cons Elementary & Middle	14,512.86	13,970.19	15,858.57	18,145.98	19,616.89	19,784.22	21,955.96	21,958.69
Huff Cons Elementary & Middle	12,033.66	12,995.50	13,351.53	13,466.76	15,936.25	16,180.68	18,282.06	18,130.47
Mullens Elementary	11,779.74	12,452.99	13,333.30	14,567.81	15,157.16	16,804.68	18,432.89	18,016.49
Pineville Elementary	11,680.83	12,523.87	12,915.43	14,145.88	16,317.04	18,126.11	20,532.84	19,668.80
Road Branch Elementary & Middle	12,699.00	13,125.53	13,979.65	16,160.35	16,764.54	16,214.55	20,640.13	21,136.62
Mullens Middle	12,685.56	12,927.50	12,599.92	14,657.01	15,365.16	16,373.33	17,682.57	17,096.00
Oceana Middle	11,511.52	12,376.96	12,181.57	14,117.60	15,382.33	15,642.75	16,523.27	16,072.47
Pineville Middle	11,256.78	11,543.43	11,919.93	13,091.74	14,139.33	14,145.77	18,353.00	16,350.49
Wyoming County East High	11,014.39	11,844.24	11,223.61	12,361.87	14,261.33	13,581.26	15,982.34	15,188.52
Westside High	9,930.04	10,644.50	12,666.09	11,814.07	13,048.15	12,597.06	14,456.37	14,256.40

- To assess facility utilization, enrollment data were compared with the functional capacity of each school facility. The chart and accompanying table identify variations in building occupancy that may affect operational costs, staffing, maintenance, and long-term facility planning.
- Interviews and document reviews identified concern that the county's procurement and financial planning practices show evidence of decentralized processes, budget management challenges, and limited long-range planning for declining enrollment and school reconfiguration. The team determined these issues may indicate a need to strengthen financial governance, transparency, and strategic planning.
- The table below presents building utilization rates based upon building capacity and student headcount at all schools in Wyoming County.

School Name	Capacity	2025-26 Headcount	Utilization Rate
New Mullens PK8	340	311	91.5%
Mullens Elementary (CLOSED)	250	173	69.2%
Huff Cons Elementary & Middle	360	235	65.3%
Pineville Elementary School	440	275	62.5%
Westside High	890	504	56.6%
Glen Fork Elementary & Middle	300	160	53.3%
Oceana Middle	420	215	51.2%
Wyoming County East High	820	400	48.8%
Berlin McKinney Elementary	730	334	45.8%
Pineville Middle	420	192	45.7%
Baileysville Elementary & Middle	520	231	44.4%
Road Branch Elementary & Middle	330	140	42.4%
Herndon Cons Elementary & Middle	440	136	30.9%
Mullens Middle (CLOSED)	480	138	28.8%

- Interview responses indicated that maintenance requests are sometimes communicated through informal channels, including group text messaging; additional review is needed to determine whether work orders are consistently entered, prioritized, and tracked through an established system.
- Interview responses indicated that staff received inconsistent information regarding Title I funding responsibilities and available funding, requiring additional clarification of program oversight, communication procedures, and fiscal decision-making authority.

Personnel and Employment Practices

- Interview responses and submitted communications identified concerns regarding personnel practices, including investigation management, disciplinary documentation, and collaboration in staffing decisions.
- A review of data from the WVDE employee disciplinary system indicates that no employee disciplinary records have been entered into the system since November 2025.

WVDE Employee Disciplinary System	
Year	Number of Records Entered
2022	11
2023	45
2024	41
2025	21
2026	0

- Interview responses indicated that some stakeholders perceived a risk of retaliation when expressing disagreement, participating in interviews, or raising concerns, while district leadership stated that retaliation does not occur.
- The Office of Accountability received multiple stakeholder communications alleging delays or concerns in the management of personnel investigations. Some interview responses indicated that recent efforts to address outstanding personnel matters occurred close in time to the WVDE review.



Michele L. Blatt
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools