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January 20, 2021

Mr. Miller L. Hall  
President  
West Virginia Board of Education  
Building 6, Room 351  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East  
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear President Hall:

Please accept this correspondence as an update to the letter report I sent to you on Monday, January 18, 2021. Since my prior correspondence, several county boards of education that had not taken action to provide an in-person option to students did convene to reconsider. As of today, the boards of education in Berkeley County, Jefferson County, and Monongalia County have taken action to provide an in-person learning option to families in their respective communities. While not returning this week, the Harrison County Board of Education will resume in-person learning on Monday, January 25, 2021.

As I indicated in my prior letter, while I am pleased the vast majority of county boards will provide an in-person learning option, there are three county boards of education that have made the determination not to provide this learning option to students. These counties include:

Gilmer County	Taylor County
Marion County	

It is important to remember that we know more about COVID-19 than we did when the pandemic started. Medical experts have reviewed the data and tell us even when community spread is high, transmission levels in schools, particularly in our lower grade levels, is minimal. We also understand that rigorously implemented mitigation strategies even further decrease the school transmission rate. Based on this data, the advice of medical professionals, and the blended learning option allowed by the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE), I believe we must continue to insist that counties comply with the WVBE motion adopted on January 13, 2021.

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Families that have selected the in-person option have determined that is the best learning option model for their children. Together, with the data we have related to the spread of COVID-19 in schools, I cannot support depriving families of that option.

I appreciate the continued leadership of the State Board of Education and its commitment to providing our children with equal access to an equitable education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Clayton Burch". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being prominent.

W. Clayton Burch  
State Superintendent of Schools

cc: West Virginia Board of Education Members