

**MINUTES
WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION
Capitol Building 6, Suite 600
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, West Virginia
December 13, 2023**

I. Call to Order

Following the welcome and Pledge of Allegiance, President L. Paul Hardesty called the meeting of the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) to order at 9:00 a.m. on December 8, 2023, in Capitol Building 6, Suite 600, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, West Virginia.

The following members were present: President Hardesty, Vice President Nancy J. White, Robert W. Dunlevy, Victor L. Gabriel, F. Scott Rotruck, Daniel D. Snavely, Christopher A. Stansbury, and Debra K. Sullivan, and ex officios Michele L. Blatt, State Superintendent of Schools, and Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Chancellor, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education. Member absent was Gregory F. Wooten.

II. Approval of Agenda

President Hardesty requested that *New Business* items *A. Amendment - Clay County Board of Education 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP)* and *B. Clay County Board of Education: Closure of H.E. White Elementary, Closure of Lizemore Elementary, and Waiver of Policy 4336, West Virginia School Bus Transportation Regulations, Procedures, and Specifications for the Design and Equipment of School Buses* be moved to follow delegations and called for a motion to approve the adjusted agenda. Mr. Dunlevy moved, and Mr. Gabriel seconded, that the adjusted agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion was carried unanimously.

III. Delegations

Ms. Christina Mounts, principal of Ranger Elementary (Lincoln County), addressed the Board regarding the closure of Ranger Elementary. Ms. Ashley Holtsclaw, Kanawha County resident, addressed the Board regarding the closure and consolidation of H.E. White and Lizemore Elementaries. Mr. Mike Nichols, Clay County resident, addressed the Board regarding the closure of Lizemore Elementary. Ms. Lynn Taylor, Clay County resident, addressed the Board regarding the closure of H.E. White Elementary. Ms. Christy Day, Director, West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Office of Communications, read a letter (attached to Official Minutes, Attachment P) from Dr. Donna Martin, Ranger Improvement Committee (Lincoln County), regarding the closure of Ranger Elementary. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment P.)

**IV. Amendment - Clay County Board of Education
2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP)**

Mr. Micah Whitlow, Director, WVDE Office of School Facilities, presented an amendment to the Clay County Board of Education's 2020-2030 CEFP for the Board's consideration. The amendment is for planning only and is pending the completion and approval of the official closure procedures found in Policy 6204, School Closings or Consolidations. The pending closures are proposed to occur at the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

Following discussion, President Hardesty called for a motion regarding Clay County's request to amend their 2020-2030 CEFP. Dr. Stansbury moved, and Ms. White seconded, that the Clay County Board of Education's request to amend their 2020-2030 CEFP be approved. Upon the call for the question the motion was carried unanimously. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment J.)

V. Clay County Board of Education: Closure of H.E. White Elementary School, Closure of Lizemore Elementary School, and Waiver of Policy 4336, West Virginia School Bus Transportation Regulations, Procedures, and Specifications for the Design and Equipment of School Buses

Mr. Whitlow and Mr. Phil Dobbins, Superintendent, Clay County Schools, presented the Clay County Board of Education's request to close H.E. White Elementary School and Lizemore Elementary School and merge the schools into Clay Elementary School, and a waiver of Policy 4336, pertaining to recommended transportation times for the Board's consideration. The closures are not contingent upon any other actions and are proposed to occur at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. The merger of schools will ensure Clay County Schools is able to continue the delivery of a thorough and efficient education.

Following discussion, President Hardesty, called for a motion regarding the closure of H.E. White Elementary School. Mr. Gabriel moved, and Dr. Stansbury seconded, that H.E. White Elementary School be closed. Upon the call for the question, the motion was carried with seven members voting yes and one member, Mrs. Sullivan, voting no.

President Hardesty called for a motion regarding the closure of Lizemore Elementary School. Dr. Stansbury moved, and Mr. Gabriel seconded, that Lizemore Elementary School be closed. Upon the call for the question, the motion was carried with seven members voting yes and one member, Mrs. Sullivan, voting no.

President Hardesty called for a motion regarding the merger of H.E. White Elementary School and Lizemore Elementary School into Clay Elementary School. Ms. White moved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded, that H.E. White Elementary School and Lizemore Elementary School be merged into Clay Elementary School. Upon the call for the question, the motion was carried with seven members voting yes and one member, Mrs. Sullivan, voting no.

President Hardesty called for a motion regarding the Policy 4336 waiver request regarding transportation time. Mr. Gabriel moved, and Dr. Stansbury seconded, that the Policy 4336 waiver

request regarding transportation time be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion was carried with seven members voting yes and one member, Mrs. Sullivan, voting no. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment K.)

VI. School Safety

Mr. Jonah Adkins, Director, WVDE Office of PK-12 Academic Support, provided an update regarding school safety.

VII. Consent Agenda

President Hardesty called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Dunlevy moved, and Ms. White seconded, that the Consent Agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question the motion was carried unanimously. (Copies appended to Official Minutes, Attachments A through I.)

- Approved the November 8, 2023, WVBE minutes (Attachment A)
- Approved Employment of Substitute Teachers in Areas of Critical Need and Shortage policies for Cabell, Clay, Harrison, Jefferson, Mingo, Monroe, Preston, Roane, and Wood Counties (Attachment B)
- Approved Employment of Retired Bus Operators as Substitutes in Areas of Critical Need and Shortage policies for Jefferson, Kanawha, and Wayne Counties (Attachment C)
- Received seven Employment of Substitute Teachers in Areas of Critical Need and Shortage affidavits from Berkeley County submitted in December 2022
- Accepted the West Virginia Educator Preparation Program Review Board's recommendation of approval of Concord University's addition of a Clinical Teacher of Record Program with Berkeley County (Attachment D)
- Received the 2023 Summer Student Opportunities for Learning and Engagement (SOLE) Final Status Report (Attachment E)
- Approved Policy 8210, Exempt Purchasing Procedures, effective 30 days from filing (Attachment F)
- Placed Policy 2322, West Virginia System of Support and Accountability, on public comment for 30 days (Attachment G)
- Placed Policy 2510, Assuring the Quality of Education: Regulations for Education Programs, on public comment for 60 days (Attachment H)

- Received an update from the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (Attachment I).

VIII. Harrison County Board of Education: Closure of Norwood Elementary and Waiver of Policy 4336, West Virginia School Bus Transportation Regulations, Procedures, and Specifications for the Design and Equipment of School Buses

Mr. Whitlow presented the Harrison County Board of Education's request to close Norwood Elementary and its merger into the existing Simpson Elementary, Nutter Fort Primary, and Nutter Fort Intermediate. This closure is not contingent upon any other actions, and it is proposed to occur at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. This merger will ensure Harrison County Schools is able to continue the delivery of a thorough and efficient education.

Following discussion, Mr. Gabriel moved, and Ms. White seconded, that the closure of Norwood Elementary and the Policy 4336 waiver request regarding transportation time be approved. Upon the call for the question the motion was carried unanimously. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment L.)

IX. Lincoln County Board of Education: Closure of Ranger PreK-5 and Waiver of Policy 4336, West Virginia School Bus Transportation Regulations, Procedures, and Specifications for the Design and Equipment of School Buses

Mr. Whitlow and Mr. Don Davis, Assistant Superintendent, Lincoln County Schools, presented the Lincoln County Board of Education's request to close Ranger Pre-5 and its merger into the existing Harts PreK-8 and West Hamlin Elementary for the Board consideration. This closure is not contingent upon any other actions, and it is proposed to occur at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. This merger will ensure Lincoln County Schools is able to continue the delivery of a thorough and efficient education.

Following discussion, Ms. White moved, and Mr. Gabriel seconded, that the closure of Ranger PreK-5 and the Policy 4336 waiver request regarding transportation time be approved. Upon the call for the question the motion was carried with seven members voting yes and one member, Mrs. Sullivan, voting no. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment M.)

X. Update: Upshur County Schools Intervention

Mr. Jeffrey Kelley, Officer, WVDE Division of Accountability, Assessment, and Leadership Development, and Mrs. Christine Miller, Superintendent, Upshur County Schools, provided an update and next steps regarding progress toward addressing the findings and deficiencies outlined in the Upshur County Schools Special Circumstance Review Report for the Board's consideration.

Following discussion, Mr. Dunlevy moved, and Dr. Snavelly seconded, that the report be accepted and required action steps to be taken by the Upshur County Schools Superintendent to address the deficiencies outlined in the Upshur County Schools Special Circumstance Review

Report be approved. Upon the call for the question the motion was carried unanimously. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment Mc.)

**XI. WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters
Executive Session**

President Hardesty called for a motion to enter executive session. Ms. White moved, in accordance with W. Va. Code §6-9A-4(b)(2)(A) [personnel exception] and/or §6-9A-4 [matters involving attorney-client privilege per *Peters v. County Commission*, 205 W. Va. 481 (1999)], that the Board enter executive session. Mr. Dunlevy seconded the motion and upon the call for the question the motion was carried unanimously. The Board moved into executive session at 10:20 a.m.

**XII. WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters
Return from Executive Session**

President Hardesty announced that the Board returned from executive session at 10:59 a.m. with no action taken and called for a motion to approve the WVBE personnel matters found in the attachment. Ms. White moved, and Mrs. Sullivan seconded, that the WVBE personnel attachment be approved. Upon the call for the question the motion was carried unanimously. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment N.)

President Hardesty called for a motion to approve the WVDE personnel matters found in the attachment. Dr. Stansbury moved, and Mrs. Sullivan seconded, that the WVDE personnel attachment be approved. Upon the call for the question the motion was carried unanimously. (Copy appended to Official Minutes, Attachment O.)

XIII. Superintendent Reports

Superintendent Blatt, assisted by Mr. Adkins provided an update regarding the WVDE's literacy and numeracy initiatives, and assisted by Mr. Kelley provided an update regarding WVDE supports to counties.

XIV. WVBE Member Updates and Requests for Information

Mrs. Sullivan requested that her no votes regarding the Clay and Lincoln County closures be recorded; continues her policy work with WVDE staff; attended meetings of Communities In Schools, West Virginia County Board Member Training Standards Review Committee, and West Virginia Commission for Professional Teaching Standards; and visited two juvenile facilities. Mr. Rotruck chaired a meeting of the West Virginia Public Education Collaborative; attended meetings of the West Virginia County Board Member Training Standards Review Committee and Education Alliance; and attended an aviation event. Mr. Dunlevy participated in West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission Super Six awards events and attended a meeting of the Education Alliance. Ms. White attended the West Virginia Association of School Administrators conference, Educational Broadcasting Authority quarterly meeting, School Building Authority of West

Virginia meeting, and visited the Country Roads coding event. President Hardesty thanked staff for their hard work over the past year and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

XV. Future Meetings

President Hardesty announced that the next regular meeting of the WVBE will be held January 10, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., in Charleston, West Virginia.

XVI. Adjourn

President Hardesty called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. White moved, and Mrs. Sullivan seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the call for the question the meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

Minutes approved by the Board on January 10, 2024.

L. Paul Hardesty, President

Nancy J. White, Vice President

*Minutes were recorded by
Virginia M. Harris
Secretary to the Board.
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