

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE COUNTY OF ROANE, HELD NOVEMBER 6, 2025, AT 6:00 PM, AT ROANE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL, SPENCER,

Present: Dennis Carpenter, Daris Harper, Jeffrey Mace, James Minney, Eileen Richardson

Absent: (none)

Meeting called to order by James Minney (6:03 pm)

This meeting could be joined remotely. The public could join by calling 1-304-553-7794 and entering the provided conference ID or on Microsoft Teams using the provided link.

Presentations

1. Superintendent Spotlight

a. RCHS Band

Band Director Hope Staats, and students Colleen Bloom, Braxton Nichols, and Morgan Spencer presented highlights of the Roane County High School Marching Band's successful season, including multiple first-place awards and a Division Two Grand Champion title at the Winfield High School Band Festival.

The board also recognized and thanked veterans in attendance for their service and acknowledged the support provided by their families.

2. Public Participation

Corrie Ota set the public participation sign-in sheet out at 5:45 pm and it was removed at 5:55 pm.

The following members of the public spoke:

Tiffany Raines, Justin Shears, Rachel Hays and Katelyn Samples.

New Business for Consideration and Potential Action

1. Update on Roane County Schools' State of Emergency

The Superintendent gave an update on the state of emergency, noting progress including the ongoing special education audit, which concludes November 12. The final hearing required under Section 6204 has been completed, and the board now moves into the decision-making phase. An official update will be presented at the December 10 State Board meeting.

Treasurer, Ann Hardman, presented a detailed report, noting that fiscal year 2025 ended with a \$1,386,462 deficit. Despite extensive cuts and combining positions, the district still faces a projected deficit of \$490,789 for the current year. Approximately 80% of the budget is tied to personnel, and \$577,699 in restricted state funds for buses, textbooks, supplies, and technology has already been used for salaries. Even with these measures, the district remains unable to balance the budget and keep a 3% reserve of \$572,486, which is required by the state. Upcoming required expenses include \$362,169 for bus replacements and \$553,404 for new iPads and MacBooks, bringing the total funding gap to about \$3.88 million. The continued operation under the current structure is unsustainable and she recommended proceeding with school closures and consolidation to prevent state intervention and protect the district's long-term stability.

The Superintendent expressed appreciation for all participants in the hearings and acknowledged the difficult decisions ahead. After reviewing the facts and financial realities, the leadership team unanimously recommended moving forward with school closures and consolidation to prevent further fiscal decline and ensure educational continuity for approximately 1,500 students. The Superintendent emphasized that while conditions remain challenging, the district is committed to sustainable solutions, including exploring charter options and hosting a statewide funding formula work session on November 17. The recommendation to adopt the motion reflects the need to preserve decision-making authority and secure the future of Roane County Schools.

2. Vote on proposed closure of Geary and Walton Elementary Middle Schools and the consolidation of their grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary, and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School

Board Member Eileen Richardson, thanked attendees and stressed that no one wants to close schools, but a decision is necessary. She noted that delaying could allow recovery but would require community support, and urged collaboration on a cost-saving plan for next year.

Board Vice President James Minney, voiced concern about state policies harming rural schools and clarified that no board member has been pressured on closure decisions. He addressed rumors of stolen funds, confirming audits found all money was spent within Roane County Schools. Minney acknowledged long bus rides but expressed confidence in safety and thanked staff and community for their efforts during the process.

Board Member Daris Harper acknowledged past voting decisions and emphasized that no funds were intentionally mismanaged. He noted the severity of the current deficit and the need to ensure employees are paid and students receive an education, even if programs like music, art, and FFA may face cuts. Harper stated that while long bus rides are a concern, difficult decisions must be made to avoid worse outcomes and urged community support through the process.

Board Member Dennis Carpenter reflected on his long service to the district, acknowledging that declining enrollment and past financial decisions have led to a \$1.5-\$2.5 million deficit. He suggested that the loss of trust and lack of appreciation were contributing factors to the increased staff turnover and the reason families were leaving public schools. Though personally opposed to consolidation, he said members must follow state laws and make difficult choices to ensure fiscal stability. He encouraged unity and rebuilding trust after the vote, noting that allowing the state to intervene would be easier but not the right decision.

Board President Jeff Mace thanked Superintendent Stellatto, staff, and the public for their work and participation during a difficult period. He acknowledged the hardship of recent decisions, saying the board has questioned its actions but remains committed to doing what's best for students. Mace noted that outdated state funding formulas and new mandates have placed unfair burdens on rural counties, leaving limited options. He accepted responsibility on behalf of the board and urged the community to stay united and support students, staff, and schools as the district works toward recovery.

Motion by James Minney and seconded by Dennis Carpenter to approve the closure of Geary Elementary Middle School and Walton Elementary Middle School and to consolidate their

grades K-5 into Spencer Elementary and their grades 6-8 into Spencer Middle School and the consolidation of Pre-K students from all schools into the space now occupied by the Office of Student Support Services at Roane County High School to be effective at the end of the current 2025-2026 school year and the Superintendent, on the Board's behalf, will submit to the West Virginia Department of Education a request to amend the School District Comprehensive Educational Facility Plan and request for a waiver to Policy 4336. Motion carried. Eileen Richardson opposed. (7:46 pm)

- a. Policy 4336 Waiver Request
 - b. Amendment of the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP)
3. Ratify suspension of Amber Lambert, substitute cook, RCS, without pay, effective October 22, 2025. Return date will be determined by superintendent.

It was noted that the employee did not request a hearing.

Motion by Daris Harper and seconded by Dennis Carpenter to go into closed session, as per WV Code 6-9A-4(b)(2)(A), to discuss suspension. Motion carried. (8:01 pm)

Motion by Eileen Richardson and seconded by Daris Harper to return to open session. Motion carried. No action was taken in closed session. (8:09 pm)

Motion by James Minney and seconded by Daris Harper to ratify the suspension of Amber Lambert, substitute cook, RCS, without pay, effective October 22, 2025. Return date will be determined by superintendent. Motion carried. (8:10 pm)

Consent Agenda - (Action)

1. Approval of minutes of regular board meeting on October 21, 2025 and special meetings on October 27, 2025, October 28, 2025, October 29, 2025, November 3, 2025 and November 4, 2025.

Motion by Dennis Carpenter and seconded by Daris Harper to approve. Motion carried. (8:25 pm)

2. Finance
 - a. Transfers/supplements to the budget
 - b. Payments of bills as submitted; pre-approval to release checks not to exceed \$20,000 prior to the next board meeting
3. Policies
 - a. First Reading
 - i. Policy 491 (revised)
 - b. Waiver Request
 - i. WVBE Policy 6200 - Waiver Request - Walton Elementary Middle School LSIC
4. Contract(s) / Bid(s) / Agreement(s)
 - a. MOU with PATCH
5. Field Trips
6. Volunteers
 - a. Spencer Elementary School
 - i. David P Starcher II
7. Student Transfers

- a. 2 student transfers from Kanawha County Schools
- b. 2 student transfers from Calhoun County Schools

Personnel Consent Agenda - (Action)

Motion by James Minney and seconded by Eileen Richardson to approve the following personnel items as recommended by Michelle Stellato, Superintendent. Motion carried. (8:30 pm)

1. Create New Position(s)
 - a. Teacher / Special Education, Itinerant (SES), 200 days, effective November 7, 2025
2. Resignation(s)
 - a. Ducasse, Jermaine - Assistant Coach, Girls Basketball (Roane County High School), effective November 7, 2025
3. New Employment(s)
 - a. Clayton, Jaylin - Substitute teacher (RCS - Substitutes), effective November 7, 2025
 - b. Ellis, Heather - Substitute aide (RCS - Substitutes), effective November 7, 2025
 - c. Lowe, Vietta - Substitute teacher (RCS - Substitutes), effective November 7, 2025
 - d. Matics, Sandra - Aide / Autism Mentor (Spencer Middle School), effective January 2, 2026
4. Transfer(s)
 - a. Popp, Danylle - Teacher / Pre-K (Spencer Elementary School) to Coordinator of Special Educator Support & Transitions (RCS - Central Office), effective December 1, 2025
 - b. Hughes, Michael - General Maintenance (multi-classified with Bus Operator) (RCS - Operations) to Mechanic (multi-classified with Bus Operator) (RCS - Operations), effective January 2, 2026
 - c. Starcher, Warren - Bus Operator (Bus #15) (RCS - Operations) to Bus Operator (Bus #24) (RCS - Operations), effective January 2, 2026
5. Extracurricular(s)
 - a. Underwood, Lana - SOAR After School Teacher (Geary Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - b. Karickhoff, Misty - Coach, Cheer (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - c. Boggs, Rebecca - SOAR After School Lead Teacher (Geary Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - d. Raynor-Sears, Dawn - SOAR After School Teacher (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - e. May, Lori - SOAR After School Lead Teacher (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - f. Merrell, Kimberly - SOAR After School Lead Teacher (Spencer Elementary

- School), effective November 7, 2025
- g. Myers, Kristen - SOAR After School Teacher (Spencer Elementary School), effective November 7, 2025
 - h. Rhodes, Jason - SOAR After School Bus Driver (Walton Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - i. McGlothlin, Lisa - SOAR After School Bus Driver (Geary Elementary / Middle School), effective November 7, 2025
 - j. Vannoy, Matthew - SOAR After School Bus Driver (Spencer Elementary School), effective November 7, 2025
 - k. Matheney, Lora - Assistant Coach, Girls Basketball (Roane County High School), effective November 7, 2025
 - l. Hoskins, Carrie - Transportation Aide (morning, Bus #28) (RCS - Operations), effective January 2, 2026

Reports of Committees

1. Walton Elementary Middle School Faculty Senate Minutes (10/22/25)

Superintendent's Remarks

The Superintendent concluded by acknowledging the challenges facing Roane County Schools and emphasized the commitment to move forward with resolve. Despite limited staff and ongoing conditions, the leadership team pledged to continue working for the benefit of students, parents, and the community, with the goal of leaving the district in a better position than when they assumed their roles.

Adjournment

1. Adjourn until the next regular board meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 6:00 pm at Roane County High School.

Motion by Dennis Carpenter and seconded by Daris Harper to approve. Motion carried. (8:34 pm)