

The Pocahontas County Board of Education met on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, for the regular board meeting at 6:00 PM in the Board Conference Room, Buckeye, West Virginia. This meeting was originally scheduled for Tuesday, January 7, 2025, but was postponed to January 14 due to inclement weather.

Members Present:

Emery Grimes, President

Dr. Sue Hollandsworth, Vice President

H. Samuel Gibson

Morgan G. McComb

Andrew "Frosty" McNabb

Meeting was called to order.

Opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA MINUTES

On the motion of Dr. Hollandsworth and seconded by Mr. McComb, the Board unanimously approved the minutes from the December 17, 2024, Board meeting.

AGENDA

On the motion of Mr. McComb, seconded by Mr. McNabb, the Board unanimously approved the agenda.

DELEGATIONS

Joshua Hardy – Attended on behalf of his daughter, Ramona, and a grade on her transcript that is incorrect. They first noticed the discrepancy when she received her final grades from her sophomore year. Due to the turnover of principal at the High School, there was no one to speak to about the concern. He and his wife met with Ms. Nicole Rose-Taylor within the first week or two of her taking the principal position to try and resolve the issue. She informed them there were other issues with transcripts and they may have to take the issues to the central office or even the state level. They had a meeting with Superintendent Bostic and Ms. Shiflett, Director of Secondary Education. They presented three issues. The first issue was a wrong grade and that has been corrected. The second issue was a weighted grade and Superintendent Bostic and Ms. Shiflett provided an explanation concerning that issue and we are satisfied that this issue is resolved. The third issue is the problem and has not been resolved. These transcripts need to be corrected as students start the process of applying for college and scholarships. Mr. Hardy continued that their complaint is that they feel the grade contradicts the 2023-2024 handbook policy, page 12 and the process for assessing grades. The handbook stated there would be a one course grade but the grades were computed on a first semester and second semester grade. He states the responses they have received are that other counties within the state compute the grades based on semesters and that it doesn't affect Grade Point Average (GPA). He concludes that this computation contradicts what is stated in the handbook and this process does affect GPA. His daughter's GPA would be higher if we went by the policy stated in the handbook. He states we don't know what else to do. We want to get this issue resolved and we are willing to do whatever is necessary, meeting with the board, central office, state representatives, for a resolution. He wants to

pursue this until there is some type of complete resolution based on the handbook policy. He requests the board look into this issue and try and help them find a solution.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The superintendent, directors, and treasurer met yesterday via Teams with our STRIVE representative, Deidre Cline. STRIVE stands for Strengthened Behavior Responses, Targeted Assistance, Regular Attendance, Increased Achievement, Valid Data Practices and Empowered Support Teams. The group discussed goals and needed resources. Our concerns included the difficulty securing qualified school counselors. The superintendent explained that the county created a Dean of Students at the High School because we couldn't find a qualified counselor. A discussion was held on who to change the certification requirements or have an alternative certification route for counselors outside of the school setting. Another focus of the discussion was creating instructional leaders. The county has a contract with Education Solutions Group which provides professional development for school administrators. This group offers support for schools that need help with master scheduling, Special Education, etc., to help with individual school needs. They have been to each school except Marlinton Elementary which should be visited within the week. The Education Solutions Group provide personalized support for the principals in our county. Another issue that was discussed with the county's STRIVE contact was safety and the many hats that our safety person wears. Discussion included funding for needed security measures in the county. Other issues discussed included getting certified personnel for positions, attendance, flexibility of schedules and resources, extending contracts for teachers to allow for all the mandatory training, and the need for a behavioral specialist.

Attendance numbers for the end of the second grading period showed 54 staff members and 82 students with perfect attendance. Green Bank once again had the best attendance record. Dr. Hollandsworth brought up the issue that there is no incentive for teachers to not take their personal days. Starting in July of 2015 staff cannot use their accumulated days to purchase insurance or years of service. She suggested that we bring this before our legislatures for consideration of a resolution.

Superintendent Bostic explained the snow day protocols including that the staff meets at 9:00 AM on Teams to discuss school matters. The Marlinton Middle School used breakout rooms to discuss different topics concerning the school. Ms. Kristi Hamons, technology coordinator, posted the times to meet with teachers for each school. Mr. McNabb asked how many hours a day the teachers are working on these days and mentioned the teachers completing their mandatory training on their snow days. Superintendent Bostic shared Marlinton Middle School's choice board which provided students options for their snow packets, and resulted in more returned work.

In the year 2023, the county had 74 followers on Facebook. In 2024 we have 200 additional followers bringing the total to around 800 followers. The more eyes on communication the more information can be provided. About five years ago we started using AppTegy to be able to send out information to several outlets at one time providing the county school system with an efficient way to communicate with stakeholders.

The first calendar committee meeting was held today for the 2025-2026 school calendar. Surveys for input from parents, students, staff, and community members will be sent out this week. A separate survey for staff will only be sent to solicit ideas about dates for various meetings. These surveys will be posted for two weeks. The committee will create sample calendars based on the results.

Superintendent Bostic finished her update with the bad news that they received an e-mail today that the National Secure Rural School Act was not approved. Mr. Grimes stated he feels it will pass with the new administration. The Senate approved bill 2581, but the House did not.

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS/ACADEMIC UPDATES

1. Student Representatives:

- Riley Pollack and Joeseeph VanMeter were unable to attend due to conflicts. Mr. VanMeter emailed Superintendent Bostic that with all the school closings and delays since the Christmas break they had nothing to report.

2. Duane Gibson: Informational Update:

- A meeting was held with the electrical engineers on September 30th concerning electrical upgrades. They are still gathering data to make determinations about how to proceed. They plan to utilize existing panel boxes and replace the interior with new bus bars, breakers, etc. They are planning on replacing the switchgear during the process which would take care of the original switchgear in the back of the kitchen area and in the interstitial area in the welding shop.
- Mr. Gibson presented that the PCHS Gym floor is in the planning stage as far as exact design and decals. A preliminary test was done that indicated no asbestos, but he is planning to have it officially tested by Pinnacle soon. The project has an initial start date the day after graduation.
- The Marlinton Elementary roof and boilers are in and finished and the damage to the roof during the demolition project has been fixed. The company that provided the demolition has become a dealer for the roof company and has assumed the warranty for the roof.
- BRIM – This report is an insurance report similar to the Fire Marshal's report and most of the infractions have already been resolved. One of the main concerns was the numbering system of the door, rooms and windows for each school for EMS purposes. This is a work in progress and the plan is to have a re-set at the end of this school year.
- Transportation – Several trips will need to be rescheduled because of snow delays and snow days. There has been a new bulk gas tank put in at Marlinton Middle School and maintenance is constructing the shelter over it. Mr. Jonathan Taylor's carpentry class is constructing the new shelter for the existing tank at Pocahontas County High School. Mr. Gibson stated he would like to get new plug in stations for the buses at Green Bank.
- Safe Schools – We have applied for a grant through Homeland Security for various items including generators at PCHS and GBEMS. The COPS grant is ongoing and will be used to rekey all schools, access controls and new camera systems from one vendor. We plan to start it once the grant information is complete. We plan to build a temporary fence at Marlinton Elementary, until funding and plans are complete for the area on the old cement pad.
- Mr. Gibson is looking into replacements for the heating units that went down at Green Bank in the Pre-School room. Heat is being maintained on occupied mode through these extreme cold temperatures so there is continual heat in the buildings.

- Mr. Gibson gave a “Shout out” to the service personnel who keep things running behind the scenes including head custodians who come in when it snows to get the schools ready, maintenance who do repairs when weather is extreme, bus drivers, cooks, mechanics, etc. Darin McKenny came in to address a freezer issue and Justin Taylor who keeps the parking lots clear. All head custodians came in last Monday during the State of Emergency to clear snow and ice to prep for school the next day.
- We received an alert that there has been excessive use of water at the storage building in Hillsboro. Investigation revealed there is a leak between the school and this building. The water has been turned off to prevent further issues until the weather permits the issue to be resolved.

APPROVAL OF THE FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

On the recommendation of the Superintendent and on the motion of Mr. McNabb seconded by Mr. Sam Gibson the following were unanimously approved: Consent Financial Requirements:

- a. Payment of Vendor Listing = **\$54,567.03**
- b. Payment of Local Government Purchasing Card = **\$144,519.94**
- c. December 16, 2024 Employee Payroll = **\$291,131.98**
- d. Extra Duty pay for the month of December 2024=**\$18,690.71**
- e. Grant Awards
- f. Budget Adjustments

Mr. McComb stepped out of the room and recused himself during the vote of Financial Requirements. Mr. McComb returned to the room to continue with the meeting.

DISCUSSION OF THE QUIET ZONE

On the recommendation of the Superintendent and on the motion of Mr. McNabb seconded by Mr. Sam Gibson the Board unanimously approved the discussion and possible resolutions concerning the Quiet Zone at Green Bank and Wi-Fi connectivity for the students.

Mr. McComb started the discussion by requesting the board ask the Green Bank Observatory to voluntarily shut down their research from 8-3 daily to allow access for WI-FI for the students. Mr. Grimes mentioned that other counties have voted to not recognize the Quiet Zone. The suggestion was made to request a meeting with the owners of the Observatory to discuss possible options, including filters on their equipment. We are investing more on students at the Green Bank School than any other school because of these issues. Mr. Sam Gibson suggested that they invite Ellie Bell from the Green Bank School to participate in this meeting since she has knowledge of the intricacies involved. Superintendent Bostic is going to schedule a meeting with the Observatory, board members, Mike O'Brien with EMS and others about this situation and possible resolutions. It is affecting the children in the county. Jim Jackson and Karen O'Neil are the managers of the Observatory according to Mr. Walker with WVMR.

APPROVAL OF TRIP TO WVU TECH

On the recommendation of the Superintendent and on the motion of Dr. Hollandsworth seconded by Mr. McComb the Board unanimously approved Cindy Solak and Sarah Cover to take 20 students by bus from Pocahontas County High School to WVU Tech, Beckley, WV to tour the Forensic Lab on January 29, 2025.

APPROVAL TO CHANGE TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

On the recommendation of the Superintendent and on the motion of Mr. McComb seconded by Mr. McNabb the Board unanimously approved the travel reimbursement rate to change from .67 cents to .70 cents per mile retroactive to January 1, 2025.

APPROVAL OF MOU WITH POCAHONTAS YOUTH REPORTING

On the recommendation of the Superintendent and on the motion of Mr. McComb seconded by Dr. Hollandsworth the Board unanimously approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Pocahontas County Board of Education and the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation Facility – Pocahontas County Youth Reporting Center (PCYRC).

APPROVAL OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

On the recommendation of the Superintendent and on the motion of Dr. Hollandsworth seconded by Mr. McComb the Board unanimously approved Parent and Community Volunteers.

APPROVAL OF SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

On the recommendation of the Superintendent and on the motion of Mr. McComb seconded by Mr. McNabb the following were unanimously approved:

Hillsboro Elementary School:

UNPAID MEDICAL
LEAVE:

AMANDA BUZZARD, from March 21, 2025, for up to six weeks.

Pocahontas County High School:

EMPLOYMENT:

CASSONDRA J. GRIFFITH as Dean of Students at Pocahontas County High School effective January 8, 2025, for 111 days for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year and shall be 210 days each year thereafter.

EMPLOYMENT: JUSTIN TAYLOR, as Head Basketball Coach (boys) at Pocahontas County High School effective November 13, 2024, for the 2024-2025 athletic season.

EMPLOYMENT: DERICK TAYLOR, as Volunteer Coach Basketball (boys) at Pocahontas County High School effective December 18, 2024, for the 2024-2025 athletic season.

Pocahontas County
Schools:

RESIGNATION: ROGER IRVINE, as substitute Custodian and Maintenance effective December 16, 2024.

EMPLOYMENT: Of the following as Substitute Teacher for Pocahontas County Schools, at state minimum professional salary for the 2024-2025 school year.

Lucas P. Adcock
Blair E. Campbell

MATTERS OF THE BOARD:

H. Sam Gibson – He had a question about the music at Hillsboro and Marlinton. A compliment to the Marlinton Middle School for their snow packets being activity based. He commented that the custodial staff at Marlinton Middle School had been complimented for doing a good job and he stated that PCHS looked great, and he was excited about the new Dean of Students. Marlinton Elementary School presented a Masked reader event before the winter break where the teachers were dressed up and it was a big hit. Shout out to Michelle Rose for organizing it. The Hillsboro Elementary School teachers in the lower grades did a read aloud during their online times on snow days. There was more attendance and participation with this. Some schools are using extracurricular activities for credit for Physical Education, and he asked that this be pursued for the students in this county.

Emery Grimes: Read a thank you note from Marlinton Middle School for the goodie trays that were provided by the board before Christmas.

Dr. Sue Hollandsworth – no report

Morgan McComb- no report

Andrew “Frosty” McNabb – He has received complaints and compliments about snow days and realizes the staff has to make the best judgements. Our girls’ basketball team is rated number two in the state. He commented that open gyms were utilized years ago and wondered what the policy was on that being used again. He stated the students lose dexterity and momentum when there is no school. Superintendent Bostic said she would check on policy about practices and games when there is no school.

Next Board of Education meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, beginning at 3:30 PM at Marlinton Middle School with a Local School Improvement meeting followed by the regular board meeting at 4:45 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Mr. McComb, seconded by Mr. McNabb the Board unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.



Secretary



President