

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF FAYETTE, TO-WIT:

The Board of Education of the County of Fayette, West Virginia, met in special session at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 7, 2016, in the George M. Edwards Conference Room of the Board of Education Office, 111 Fayette Avenue, Fayetteville, West Virginia, to conduct a Public Hearing. Board members and Central Office personnel present were:

Steve Bush	President
Pat Gray	Vice-President
Patsy Holliday	Members
Leon Ivey	
Lou Jones	
Terry George	Superintendent
Gary Hough	Associate Superintendent
Paula Fridley	Treasurer
Margaret Pennington	Director of Personnel
Anna Kincaid-Cline	Director of Secondary Schools
Joseph Dooley	Director of Child Nutrition
David Keffer	Director of Operations
Beverly Campbell	Executive Secretary

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Bush called the meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mrs. Holliday. It was noted four members were present with Lou Jones running behind.

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 3234 – School Calendar (Senate Bill 359; WV Code §18-5-45; WV Code §18-5A-5; WV Code §18A-5-2):

Joseph Dooley welcomed everyone for the second reading and discussion of the calendar plans for the 2016-2017 school year. Mr. Dooley gave a brief history of why we are here today. We are required by our legislators to have a calendar introduced each year that has 180 days of instruction and an employment term of 200 days, 48 weeks in the calendar starting August 1st to June 30th. All lost instructional time must be recovered and the county policy is mandatory so we had to have our policy too. Seven legal holidays, one election day, six OSE days, six additional non-instructional days, 180 days of instruction, and a total of 200 days each school year. The calendar may include 40 non-instructional days. All OSE or non-instructional days may be used to make up lost instructional time. We had a calendar planning committee. We stayed student centered and we tried to work our needs and our wants. Mr. Dooley went over the two proposed calendars on which one has a spring break and the other one has Friday and Monday off of the Easter season.

Mr. George asked Gary Hough to go over our make-up schedule.

Gary Hough stated we have missed a total of ten snow days. All instructional days have to be made up. Using the days over spring break made a whole lot more sense because those are the days we can capture the most student instruction prior to taking the test. Friday, March 25, 2016, is being converted from a continuing education day to a make-up day. The other make-up days are going to be Tuesday, March 29, Wednesday, March 30, Thursday, March 31, and Friday, April 1, 2016 are being converted as out of calendar days into make-up days. We did make Monday, March 28th a day off to give people who are traveling to visit family for the Easter holiday an opportunity to do so. We have made sure that next year's calendar is built to give Friday and Monday off at Easter. The end of the year make-up days will be May 24, 25, 26, 27 and May 31st. The last day for students right now if we have no more snow days will be Tuesday, May 31, 2016.

Mr. George said we also would like to stress that we backed up our testing window for the state assessment by the same number of five days so that we are not testing so early that the kids have downtime at the end of the year. Mr. Hough stated that we captured more instructional time by doing that.

Mr. Hough asked if the board members had any questions. Mrs. Holliday asked if this affects our seniors' graduations and Mr. Hough told her that it will not affect graduations.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED SCHOOL CALENDAR 2016-2017:

Teri Harlan came to voice her concern about the two proposed school calendars. We continue to do the same thing year after year. Both proposed calendars have 30 days at the end of the year to allow for snow make-up days. Please work really hard to at least make the snow make-up days meaningful. There was very little instruction last year at the end of May and two of my children packed up their desks 2 weeks before school was out for the year. Please look at an alternative calendar. If not, we must have instructional time all the way through the end of school. The two hour delays for parent teacher conference and faculty senate are a big pain for parents who work that cannot leave their children at home by themselves.

Mrs. Harlan thanked the board members and Mr. George for serving. Please be our voice for our children. Please speak up for them.

Mr. George addressed Mrs. Harlan regarding a balanced calendar. The only problem with a balanced calendar in West Virginia, is that by WV code, we can only employ our people for a 48 week window. That means that the month of July must be held sacred. We can start no earlier than August 1st and end no later than June 30th. That restricts developing what we refer to as a balanced calendar. It is difficult to develop a calendar in rural West Virginia especially in a county such as Fayette, Greenbrier, Raleigh, my former county where we have snow. We are going to get snow during the year. Ten days is not an exceptional number of snow days. We have to be able to build in those days to make up lost instructional time. We are hoping that next year that the legislature will let us use accrued time to buy back some instructional days, but you must understand that in using accrued time, you have to account for the two hour delays. Anytime there is an assembly at school that is a non-instructional assembly, that also must be deducted from the accrued instructional time. So, I don't know just what kind of bonus that would be able to buy in most of the counties, especially the rural counties that have long bus routes, but we are looking and taking advantage of every day we can. We proposed that the state give us a better testing window. They have done that this year. We can back our tests up so that students are not sitting in class for two to three weeks after the state test. It will be a very minimal amount of time that they are still in school after the conclusion of the state testing. That is one advantage that we have gotten this year. We are taking every advantage we can to make every instructional day count and if we have teachers who are packing up desks, if we have schools that are shutting down a week prior to the end of school, I would like to know when that happens, if it happens. I hope it does not, but if does, I would certainly like to know that and would welcome somebody giving me a call if that were to happen because instructional time is from the beginning of school until the end of school. Just because we have completed our general summative assessment, instruction does not stop and we will strive with our building principals this year to see that takes place right up until the last instructional day. I do appreciate you coming to speak about the calendar. I know that West Virginia school calendars need work. I hope that the legislature continues to address that, Mrs. Harlan, and I think that if we speak to our legislators that someday they will look at a balanced calendar, but a lot of counties do not have the advantage of having HVAC or some form of air conditioning in their schools so attending school all of July or part of July and most of August is very difficult for a lot of those school systems. We could probably do it here, but I do not know if other counties could manage that. Fayette County is fortunate in that regard. So, it will mean an extended break for students, but your first semester will be over by Christmas. We will guarantee you a long weekend at Easter. Because that is the calendar that I personally am recommending to the board and I am going to ask for their recommendation here this evening on what they would like to say. Thanks to everyone for coming out. I appreciate it very much.

Mr. George recommended to the board members that we endorse the calendar that has a guaranteed long weekend at Easter, and gets our instructional days in without the prospect of having to take away spring break again. I think that was unfair to the staff, the students, and the parents this year. I think it was unfortunate that we had to do that. I would much prefer guaranteeing them a long weekend next year rather than promising them something that we know we cannot keep.

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS:

Regular Board Meeting

Monday, April 4, 2016 – 6:00 p.m.
Board of Education Office

ADJOURNMENT:

At approximately 5:25 p.m., it was moved by Mr. Ivey, second by Mr. Gray and carried 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

President

Secretary/Superintendent

