

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

FAYETTE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Public Hearing

Meadow Bridge High School New Gym
Meadow Bridge, West Virginia 25976

Tuesday, May 2, 2017
6:30 p.m.

The Board of Education of the County of Fayette, West Virginia, met in special session at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2, 2017 at Meadow Bridge High School New Gym, Meadow Bridge, West Virginia, to conduct a public hearing for proposed closure of Meadow Bridge High School at the end of the 2019 school year, beginning with the 2020 school year, students who are currently in grades 9-12 at Meadow Bridge High School will attend Midland Trail High School or Greenbrier West High School in Greenbrier County. Meadow Bridge Elementary School will be maintained and reconfigured to a PK-8 and consolidated by combining all students from Meadow Bridge Elementary grades PK-6 and the influx of students in grades 7-8 from Meadow Bridge High School resulting from the Meadow Bridge High School closure at the end of the 2019 school year. The existing 1977 and 1987 addition to the Meadow Bridge High facility will be utilized by the middle level students, beginning with the 2020 school year, while awaiting the construction of a new PK-8 school. In a second phase, a new PK-8 school will be constructed to house all students from the reconfigured and consolidated Meadow Bridge PK-8 School.

The hearing was called to order by Mr. Bush at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. McGuffin.

The following were in attendance:

Terry George, Superintendent, Fayette County Schools
Steve Bush, President, Fayette County Board of Education
Pat Gray, Vice-President, Fayette County Board of Education
Steve Slockett, Member, Fayette County Board of Education
Patsy Holliday, Member, Fayette County Board of Education
Darrin McGuffin, Member, Fayette County Board of Education
Gary Hough, Associate Superintendent
David Keffer, Director of Operations
Dawn Dooley, Director of Elementary School
Joe Dooley, Director of Child Nutrition
Paula Fridley, Treasurer
Robert Hollandsworth, Director of Technology
Anna Kincaid-Cline, Director of Secondary Schools
Rebecca Tinder, Attorney
Beverly Campbell, Executive Secretary

Mr. Bush, President, Fayette County Board of Education called the public hearing to order and read WV Code 18-5-13A giving the instructions to the speakers who had signed up by 6:30 p.m. (See Attachment A)

Rebecca Tinder, Attorney-at-Law, served as moderator and Evalyn Garrett Bibbee, Court Reporter of Garrett Reporting Service was the official recorder for the public hearing. Beverly Campbell, Executive Secretary, recorded those in attendance and brief minutes of the public hearing. The hearing was also recorded and videotaped.

SCHOOL CLOSURE HEARING SCRIPT

I call this public hearing to order. My name is Steve Bush. I declare that at least a quorum of the Board and the Superintendent are present. It is now 6:30 p.m. This public hearing has been convened in accordance with the terms of West Virginia Code 18-5-13a, in connection with the proposed closure/consolidation of Meadow Bridge High School. This statute provides that members of the public:

1. Have a right to be present;
2. Have a right to submit statements and testimony; and
3. Have a right to question school officials.

Members of the public, in the order of sign-in, shall be afforded with an opportunity to submit statements and testimony and to ask questions of school officials. A total of 17 members of the public have indicated their desire to submit statements and testimony or question school officials. Therefore, in order to give every member of the public a fair opportunity to submit statements and testimony and to question school officials, 5 (no less than 3) minutes have been allotted for each member of the public. The responses of school officials to questions shall not be included in the time allotted. No member of the public may present more than once. No member of the public may "grant" time to another presenter. Gary Hough has been designated as the time keeper and will advise when 1 minute is remaining for each presentation and when time has expired. It is not necessary to consume the total amount of time allotted. Written statements and materials will be given full consideration.

All questions shall be initially be directed to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may elect to respond to the question or may delegate another school official to respond to the question.

At the conclusion of all presentations by members of the public, the administration will be afforded with an opportunity to respond to any information that has been presented by members of the public.

Aside from questions that may be directed to school officials and the responses, there will be no direct debate or dialogue between members of the public and school officials.

No decision upon the proposed closure will be made tonight. The proposed closure of Meadow Bridge High School will be the subject of a meeting scheduled for May 16, 2017, at the conclusion of the 6:30 p.m. meeting. The Board will conduct all deliberations in open session and a vote will be taken in open session following the Board's deliberations.

Those who signed to speak addressed Mr. George, and the Fayette County Board of Education as follows:
(comments are not all inclusive)

1. **Elizabeth Hamlin**, said on behalf of the LSIC at Meadow Bridge High School in opposition of the consolidation plan of the School Building Authority and the Fayette County Board of Education. We have petitioned you. Minimum support. Committee of 54 not effective. Travel time, travel dangers, negative impact on drop outs, etc. Faulty data. Where are the answers to our questions? Transportation to be provided? Refugee status? Provide complete and correct information. We have fought long and hard. We will not give up and we will not give in. Do not begrudge our children in Meadow Bridge. All Fayette County students deserve a quality education. Mr. Hough addressed the questions regarding transportation. Mr. George said no county is required to accept.
2. **Sandra Gwinn**, Meadow Bridge High School is supposed to get a PK-8. What phase? After the plateau? How much state aide do we get for each student? Would lose money if students go to another county. Will Fayette County provide buses for extracurricular activities? Pot holes here at Meadow Bridge High School. New parking lot at central office. Actions speak louder than words. Maintenance truck for chairs. How about bring gravel instead of chairs? New school last phase? Mr. George responded: PK-8 school 2nd phase, amount aide per student \$5,000.00 -\$6,000.00 per student, activity buses will be addressed.
3. **Shirley McGraw**, Pot holes, I could have fallen in one and I would own Fayette County Board of Education. Fix pot holes. Been fighting for 46 years. I love Meadow Bridge High School. I am a 1954 graduate. Need second opinion on Meadow Bridge High School second floor. We were told we could not get a second opinion. We can fix that school. I was told that one county will not accept our students. Do a survey of our young people. If you send our kids to Greenbrier County and they get filled up, what will Meadow Bridge kids do? Activity buses? Kids have problems? Our teachers go the extra mile to see kids have an education. Meadow Bridge High School is the best in Fayette County. Disgrace to send students to other counties. Response: Pot holes will be addressed.
4. **Carolyn Arritt**, gave two papers with questions she would like to have answered. (See Attachment B) Transportation for several areas, where will they attend? State code states SBA requires all boards of education to have a maintenance plan for all buildings. Reconfigure PK-8 – no change to bus routes? Prince to Midland Trail High School distance. Activity buses? School day begin at same time? Note question number ten: What documentation does Fayette County have? Who were individuals who prepared closure documents? Tests do better, parent participation higher, etc., in smaller schools. The more years a student attends a school, the better they are known. Smaller schools are better community schools. Page 72 of the closure document says to build a new school costs more than to renovate. Anna Kincaid-Cline addressed curriculum questions: Meadow Bridge High School has enhanced curriculum. Mr. George addressed questions from Mrs. Arritt. Mr. Hough said separate elementary runs. Mr. George Policy 2510 – Fayette County buses will run in Meadow Bridge, activity bus decision is yet to be determined, projected numbers can be determined, addition to Midland Trail High School, and yes, Midland Trail High School will receive same curriculum as Oak Hill. Mr. Hough said he checked the time limits for the bus routes – ran 10 mph below speed limit. PK-8 – older students for younger students, county has preventative maintenance on all facilities, rankings were made with School Building Authority, Fayette County Capital Planning Committee did accept the plan, the Fayette County central office prepared documents.
5. **Joe Rozell**, Be angry and sin not. Speaks from the heart. Pray for God's will. Bond issue Oak Hill man said he felt Meadow Bridge had been hung out to dry. I feel if your kids were here, you would say community needs to be involved. Just sports, not important. Robbing kids of sports. It is never right to do wrong and it is never wrong to do right. No matter degree, without common sense, I believe they have missed the point.
6. **Sandra Harkins**, Curriculum questioned. Mr. George's salary questioned. How do you justify? Summers County has already purchased trailers for our students. Does closing Meadow Bridge High School pay Mr. George's salary? For whom do you work? Citizens do not trust you as far as they can throw you. Spoke about a list of questions. Mr. George responded that we have no

1. How will curriculum be enhanced at the renovated Midland Trail High School?
2. Did students from Gauley Bridge get a new curriculum when they went to Valley High, or did Mt. Hope get a new curriculum when they went to Oak Hill High?
3. How many students do you anticipate losing to Greenbrier County after the closure of Meadow Bridge High School?
4. What will happen if student enrollment does not increase at Midland Trail High School in grades 9-12 after the closures Meadow Bridge High and Valley High?
5. Will the Fayette County board be held accountable for the injury or death of a student returning to the Meadow Bridge area after participating in an after school activity of athletic event?
6. Your anticipated savings from the closure of MBHS is listed at \$300,988 in your closure document. What is the per pupil state aid dollars currently?
7. How much stat aid do you anticipate losing from sending students to Greenbrier West and Summers County?
8. Will the loss of state aid exceed savings or make it minimal savings?
9. How many tax dollars do the taxpayers of Bellwood, Springdale, Meadow Bridge, and surrounding areas send Fayette County for educational purposes?
10. How much will transportation costs change? Increase or decrease?
11. What percentage of the budget is the \$300, 988 in savings?
12. Do we have insurance on the coal boiler furnace at MBHS? In not why?
13. When was the insurance on the coal boiler discontinued?
14. If we did/do have insurance on the coal boiler, why not let the company that made it service it instead of allowing Keffer's crew of misfits to incorrectly "fix" the boiler?
15. Is curriculum not driven by the state?
16. How exactly will it change for the majority of students?
17. With the decrease in students will there be any decrease in central office staff?
18. Will Fayette County busses run in Meadow Bridge?
19. Will an activity bus be running from Greenbrier West to Meadow Bridge?

20. Will Meadow Bridge PK-8 be on the same calendar as Greenbrier County schools?
21. What will the reduction in professional and service personnel be county wide after the closures?
22. With the addition of six classrooms Midland Trail will still be an inferior building. What are the plans to add things such as an auditorium and an auxiliary gym as required by policy 6200 for new buildings?
23. Will Midland Trail High have the same curriculum as Oak Hill High?
24. Do you have an agreement with surrounding counties to accept our students? If so, is the agreement verbal or written?
25. As the leader of Fayette County Schools, what led you to decide that all Fayette County students could not be educated in Fayette County?

1. Using your transportation information on page 75 of the closure document, where are the students from the Loops Road, Crickmer, Highland Mt, Prince, Patterson Mt., Meadow Bridge, and Backus Mt. be attending high school?
2. Is it the intention that any of these students from the previously mentioned areas in question #1 be attending Greenbrier West High School?
3. What curriculum will the children be having at the new school that they are not currently receiving?
4. The excess levy will be up for a vote in 2019. What incentives will Meadow Bridge citizens, Valley citizens, and Mt. Hope citizens be given in order to support the levy?
5. The state code 18-9D-16, as stated by the SBA document, requires all county boards of education to **implement a plan of regularly scheduled maintenance and preventive maintenance for all facilities within the county.** What does the document statement on page 17 "the existing buildings at Meadow Bridge will not receive any upgrades unless system fail" mean?
6. Table 17 on page 75 of the closure document, has current and proposed transportation times for Meadow Bridge High School once the merger/reconfiguration/consolidation would occur with Midland Trail high "School 9- 12."
 - 1) Using this table, are all the current buses and replacement buses traveling to Midland Trail?
 - 2) The document states the reconfigured MBES pk-8 will not have any changes to the current bus routes. Is that correct? If so, will there be two bus runs from each of these areas in the mornings and in the afternoons? For example, will the Prince bus go to Midland Trail and then make a second trip from Prince for the pk-8 students?
 - 3) It seems, by the table, that the Prince bus can come to Meadow Bridge in 51 minutes and to Midland Trail in 55 minutes. From Prince to Midland Trail, it is 17 miles farther than from Prince to Meadow Bridge. Will the bus be able to travel 17 miles in four minutes?
 - 4) Will there be activity buses for these students?
7. For Meadow Bridge High students, the school day begins about 7:30 a.m. Do you plan to have the school day to begin the same time?
8. Would you please explain how the rankings of 1 through 5 were determined on the FCCPC Activities Facilities Evaluation Matrix shown on the last page of the closure document?
9. Since the Capital Planning Committee did not decide on this plan, who were the individuals who decided on this proposed plan?
10. What documentation does Fayette County have to show that with the change of county board members and often the change of county superintendents in other counties that the Fayette County students will continue to be accepted in the adjacent county school systems without interruption?
11. Who were the individuals who prepared the 2017 closure document?

knowledge of Summers County trailer purchase. Mr. Hough responded that all emails with correct information got answered.

7. **Bobbi Chittum**, said her child is third generation Meadow Bridge. These teachers are his future. We all have our limits. Why do you get to choose what will affect students? I had to leave Meadow Bridge to go to Independence and no one cared or knew me in that big school. I was nothing to them. My 5-year-old and my 3-year-old are not going to get to play. It is not fair. Put your kid in my kid's shoes and tell them you are closing school and not going to get to play. If my kid goes to Greenbrier County, do I have to pay my taxes? I was told I had to turn in a tax form for my child to attend kindergarten. I do not understand. You do not have to answer but think about it.
8. **Angela Gilkerson**, spoke about lack of adhering to state code and policies. She said the closure documents are a mess. The diagram of the school is not correct. You do not take the time to prepare document accurately. No coal burner at Meadow Bridge Elementary School since 2010. No common courtesy to present correctly.
9. **Angela Wickline**, said in 2010 there was a leak in the gym and there was a problem with guttering. In 2017, the same issues. I teach in Greenbrier County and students are denied all the time. I have seen students turned away. Is Fayette County going to pay Greenbrier County for more teachers? Ms. Wickline spoke about the math scores at Meadow Bridge High School and the smarter balance test scores. Bigger is not better.
10. **Misty Richmond**, said we have reached a point where we have implored until blue in the face. We will not lay down and stop fighting. No matter what question I ask, you are going to have a pretty answer. Every time the central office comes here, there are cops. It is pretty sad. I am going to Concord to become a teacher. I also sub as service personnel in Greenbrier and Fayette County. We have struggled for years to get academic tools. We have submitted FOIA requests and they have ignored. Greenbrier County has teachers who love kids. Morale is better in Greenbrier County. They put children first. That is what is missing in Fayette County. I feel sorry for you.
11. **Kara Richmond**, asked have you been to Princeton lately? They have technology there but here it is better. What kind of future are you asking our children to have? Children are ghosts in large schools. I was a nobody when I went to a consolidated school. Invest in our children, our school.
12. **Libby Akers**, said as an eleven-year-old, I went to another area and another school. No one knew me. There was bullying and lack of a support system. I had depression, etc., as a result of having to go to the larger school. I came back to a small community because I was supported there. Looking back, I regret taking my child to another school. Data can be easily manipulated. Leave out a factor or use a wrong method to calculate. Sometimes you need to look up from papers. I apologize to the Meadow Bridge community. Until I walked in their shoes, I did not understand. Mr. George responded no county is mandated to accept. Trying to make it possible for all to attend Fayette County.
13. **Lloyd Adkins**, asked what is your budget next year? He said the central office is top heavy. Do you use purchase orders? Does your board approve purchase orders? What is policy for \$5,000.00 purchase? How much extra would it cost to have a K-12 here? Have you sat down and talked with the people in the communities who are going to lose their schools? Bank account? I do understand these things and how they work. What is anticipated closure date for Meadow Bridge High School? What are your feelings about closure? Property values will go down and it will hurt your levy. Paula Fridley responded to Lloyd Adkins' questions.
14. **Bonnie Hicks**, said research has shown busing exploits children's time – poor grades and bad study habits. What is impact of long bus runs? What is effect of long bus runs on families? What is cost of long bus runs? Which high school has highest graduation rate? Which high school has lowest discipline rate? We feel better for three high schools – Oak Hill High School, Valley High School, and Meadow Bridge High School.

15. **Cynthia Roberts**, said that bigger is not always better. Kids will be home schooled or will quit. Mr. George does not live in this county. He has an apartment that the county pays for. You did not allow time for picking up students or bad roads. Child struggles with reading. Big schools will not help. Mr. George personal against Meadow Bridge.
16. **Frank Groves**, said I am a 1960 graduate of Meadow Bridge High School. Rodney King said can't we just get along? Mr. Groves expressed several concerns. "They say they will work with us in other counties as far as we know." Have you ever ridden a bus 2 and a half to 3 hours a day? Mr. Hough said the longest bus ride is 58 minutes.
17. **Prentiss Moody**, said I am a 1991 graduate from Meadow Bridge High School. I was a trouble maker, bully, whatever you want to call it. Teachers helped tutor me. You wanted to close Meadow Bridge in 1989. Your plan is set in motion. You are not listening to what this community has said since 1989. You do not fix the problems we have asked you to fix. We did not ask for consolidation. I did not like school but I was pushed by people who cared about me. Give our teachers credit. Give our community credit.

Mr. Bush read the future board meeting dates and times, purpose, and location as follows:

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS:

| Date | Purpose | Location |
|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| 05/04/17 at 4:30 pm | Closure Hearing | Oak Hill High School |
| 05/04/17 at 6:30 pm | Closure Hearing | Fayetteville High School |
| 05/08/17 at 4:30 pm | Closure Hearing | Fayetteville Elementary School |
| 05/08/17 at 6:30 pm | Closure Hearing | Gatewood Elementary School |
| 05/10/17 at 4:30 pm | Closure Hearing | Collins Middle School @ Oak Hill High School |
| 05/10/17 at 6:30 pm | Closure Hearing | Mt. Hope Elementary School |
| 05/15/17 at 6:00 pm | Regular Meeting | Board of Education Office |
| 05/16/17 at 4:30 pm | Closure Hearing | Rosedale Elementary School |
| 05/16/17 at 6:30 pm | Closure Hearing | New River Elementary School |

ADJOURNMENT:

At approximately 8:15 p.m., it was moved by Mr. Slockett second by Mr. McGuffin and carried 5 to 0 to adjourn the meeting.

President

Secretary/Superintendent