

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

FAYETTE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Public Hearing

Mount Hope Elementary School Gymnasium
Mount Hope, West Virginia 25880

Wednesday, May 10, 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 Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at Mount Hope Elementary School Gymnasium, Mount Hope, West Virginia, to conduct a public hearing for proposed closure of Rosedale and Mount Hope Elementary Schools at the close of the 2019 school year. The reconfiguration of Collins Middle School from grades 5-8 to grades 6-8 at the close of the 2019 school year. The reconfiguration/consolidation of New River Elementary School students to create a 3-5 elementary school which will maintain its grade 3-4 students and will accommodate the influx of students in grades 3-5 as a result of the closure of Mount Hope Elementary School, the influx of students in grades 3-4 as a result of the closure of Rosedale Elementary School, and the influx of grade 5 students from the reconfiguration of Collins Middle School at the close of the 2019 school year. The creation of a new Oak Hill PK-2 to accommodate the influx of all students in grades PK-2 from Rosedale, Mount Hope, and New River Elementary Schools at the close of the 2019 school year, or later if the completion of the new school is delayed, which will be located on the Oak Hill Campus. Some Mount Hope Elementary School students grades PK-5 will attend Bradley Elementary School in Raleigh County.

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

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
Paula Fridley, Treasurer
Robert Hollandsworth, Director of Technology
Anna Kincaid-Cline, Director of Secondary Schools
Dawn Dooley, Director of Elementary Schools
Joe Dooley, Director of Child Nutrition
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 Midge Billanti and David Bolin, Court Reporters of Billanti & Associates were the official recorders for the public hearing. Beverly Campbell, Executive

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 6:30p.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 Mount Hope Elementary 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 8 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 Mount Hope Elementary 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.

Secretary, recorded those in attendance and brief minutes of the public hearing. The hearing was also recorded and videotaped.

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

1. **Thomas Brown**, said I prefer Mount Hope people to board. Mrs. Holliday is the only one who has cared about us. Mr. George is Randolph County and is not vested in Fayette County. Proper maintenance has not been done. This board should be ashamed of themselves to send students out of county. All other areas will have an elementary school but Mount Hope.
2. **Jessica Zukowski**, said I am a product of Mount Hope Elementary School. I graduated from Oak Hill High School. I left for ten years. I came back and became involved in Mount Hope Elementary School. Each year I have written a grant for family fun night. We have been awarded this grant over and over. They can walk to this school but how will they get to a school fifteen minutes away? Summer Energy Express program. How can we continue this? I have built relationships with parents. I have been PTO President for three years. Parents now feel empowered. We stand united against this closure. Our teachers, secretary, and cooks know all the kids and their names. Our parents want to send their students to Mount Hope Elementary School. I am not against improvements. Mr. George responded to Ms. Zukowski regarding summer programs. He said he is not sure what will happen. Mr. George said that kids are successful in Oak Hill.
3. **Carolyn Cheese**, On behalf of Mount Hope Organization I am reading this letter to Mr. Bush. The letter referenced awarding scholarships to students. Unemployed poverty rate, etc. She read I find it disturbing that you are closing the only school in Mount Hope. Opposes closing Mount Hope Elementary School. Will have a negative impact on Mount Hope. I urge you to keep Mount Hope Elementary School open. It is the best decision.
4. **David Snyder**, said I live in Raleigh County. I grew up in Pax. I graduated from Mount Hope High School. I live on Sand Branch Road and my kids attend Raleigh County. I have been in Mount Hope Basketball program. I am president of youth Football league in this town. I agree the high school consolidation needed to happen. I donate a lot of hours to this town. I believe people need to come in here and do something. You closed the middle school. You are going to close this one school. It is going to kill the community. Consider a new school, consider Mount Hope. We have high attendance rate. When kids miss the bus, parents do not have a ride and they are going to miss school. Some of the consolidation plans are ridiculous. Mr. George told Mr. Snyder that the school is in a state of disrepair and need a new school. Mr. Hough ran the bus routes. Forty-Five minutes is longest route.
5. **Patricia Conley**, said I am a graduate of Mount Hope High School and oppose closing Mount Hope Elementary School. It is the best small community. Local school binds parents together. We have already lost middle and high schools. 44.8% of residents live below poverty level. Removal of elementary school will be the final dagger. It would make better sense to build a new elementary school in Mount Hope. It is about money. You cannot be trusted. Failure to represent children in Mount Hope will be long remembered.
6. **Cathy Broughman**, I have been a teacher for 36 years – Music K-5. My issue with this particular project, you are going to have PK-2 and 3-5. Which do I teach? Grade 5 – Teach beginning band. Supposed to be equal education. Collins Middle School students get more hours of instruction in music. My personal opinion, being a musician my whole life, if plan passes, I would have beginning recorder. Teachers do not teach the same. What I taught would be a total loss. Mr. George responded: Depending on employee vote, you will teach either K-2 or 3-5.
7. **Dan Matheny**, I have sentiments with other speakers. Nobody cares about Mount Hope. 1951 passed a bond. 1973 bond – new central office, new FIT, new Midland Trail High School, Valley High School, Fayetteville High School, Oak Hill High School, Scarbro Elementary School, Valley Elementary School, and Gauley Bridge Elementary School. No Mount Hope. A new Oak Hill PK-2, Collins Middle School, Oak Hill High School, VHS PK-8, Midland Trail Elementary School—Mount Hope will be the only district without a school. Plenty of money for everyone else but Mount Hope. Thank you, Mrs. Holliday. You

are the only one who cares. Serena Starcher said will not move school out of Mount Hope.

8. **Josh McGraff**, No big speech. You already have your mind made up. Wonderful teachers. Mount Hope is in shambles. Why haven't you tried to repair the school? I ask you not to put kids on a bus fifteen minutes down the four lane. I beg you please do not take this away from kids. If this school shuts down, community shuts down. Please reconsider.

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

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS:

Date	Purpose	Location
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 7:14 p.m., it was moved by Mr. McGuffin second by Mr. Slockett and carried 5 to 0 to adjourn the meeting.

President

Secretary/Superintendent