

MINUTES OF THE LEWIS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Saturday, January 16, 2021

Date: January 16, 2021

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Kind of Meeting: Special

Where Held: Administration Building

Presiding Officer: James Flesher, President

Members Present: David Bush, Phyllis Hinterer, Mike Holden – via phone, Kenny Lowther  
Dr. Robin Lewis, Superintendent

Others in attendance: Patrick Martin, Adam Burkhammer, Anessa Griffith, Erica Young –  
WBOY

Attendance – via phone: 304-476-3660, 304-884-6901, 304-276-8423, 304-709-0031, 304-460-  
5177, 304-517-8425, 304-745-3329, 304-517-5951, 304-203-2736, 304-203-8972, 304-476-  
4833, 304-439-4997, 304-695-9753

Staff in attendance: Jeff Tidd, Monika Weldon

January 14, 2021

“To: Members of the Lewis County Board of Education:

Notice is hereby given that a special meeting of the Board of Education of the County of  
Lewis, State of West Virginia, will be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of January, at 3:00 p.m., at the  
Administration Building, 239 Court Avenue, Weston, West Virginia, to consider the following  
business and take appropriate action related thereto:

I. Discussion:

1. Media Release:

*For Immediate Release: Jan. 13, 2021*

**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION MOTION ADOPTED FOR  
IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION**

**CHARLESTON, W.VA.** - The West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) adopted parameters for in-person instruction in public schools in the state. The WVBE's action comes following the Executive Order issued by Governor Jim Justice earlier this week permitting schools to return to in-person instruction on January 19, 2021.

The WVBE's action today was based on updated COVID-19 health data and its transmission rate in schools. State health officials and many leading national health organizations support the return to in-person learning because transmission rates within schools do not reflect heightened rates in the community.

For grades pre-K through 8, the action outlines expectations that schools offer a full in-person learning option four or five days each week. However, counties may begin with blended learning models providing at least two days of in-person instruction each week. Virtual learning options remain open to families, and each county is required to offer virtual learning programs for those selecting this option.

Schools are expected to offer an in-person option to students in grades 9 through 12 as long as their county is not red on the DHHR County Alert System Map. In-person instruction may also include blended learning models.

Counties are expected to continue to work with their local health departments to move specific classroom or schools to temporary remote learning if specific health needs related to that classroom or school are identified irrespective of the county's color on the DHHR County Alert System Map.

“As a State Board of Education, we have to do everything in our power to bring our children back to school in person,” said WVBE President Miller Hall. “I believe what our health experts are telling us, and I know our schools are the safest place for many of our children who are a part of vulnerable populations.”

Today's action also focused on the importance that schools and teachers play in many students' lives.

“Too many of our children are falling further behind with each day they are not in school,” said WVBE Vice President Tom Campbell. “We know more about the disease now than we did a year ago, and we are able to make these types of decisions with the best interest of our children in mind. Nothing can replace the role a teacher plays in a child's life, and in-person instruction is essential to this.”

Each Monday, State Superintendent of Schools W. Clayton Burch will provide the WVBE with an update of each county's in-person instruction status. The Board has instructed the State Superintendent, WVDE staff, and all county-level education leaders to continue to provide educational information about the benefit

and safety of the COVID vaccination to teachers, education staff, community members and residents throughout the state.

2. WV Board of Education Motion Regarding In-person instruction: (see attachment)

### **West Virginia Board of Education Motion Adopted Regarding In-person Instruction for West Virginia Schools**

#### **Motions:**

I move that the WVBE adopt the following parameters for in-person instruction:

The WVBE desires to return students to in-person learning and to ensure that students, teachers, and staff can do so safely. The Board recognizes that in-person learning is the best mode in which to foster a student's intellectual, social-emotional, and physical growth and well-being.

To continue to ensure that schools remain safe for students, teachers, and staff, education leaders at the local level are directed to continue monitoring and enforcing the WVDE's six identified mitigation strategies, especially mask wearing.

Parents will continue to have the ability to choose a virtual learning option for their children.

#### ***For all PreK-8 students in West Virginia***

PreK-8 schools will attend in-person instruction regardless of their county's color on the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) County Alert System map.

All PreK-8 students will resume in-person instruction on January 19. Counties do not have the option to implement full countywide remote learning for PreK-8 students. However, a local county board of education retains the authority to work with local health officials and to close individual classrooms or schools when a specific health need related to that classroom or school is identified. Such closures shall be of limited duration and related to the specific health need of the school or classroom. Teachers and staff will continue to provide essential student support services including meals, student engagement, all special education services and support to at-risk students.

Counties are encouraged to resume in-person instruction 4 or 5 days per week on January 19.

Counties have the option to utilize blended instruction models beginning January 19. Blended models must provide each student with in-person instruction at least 2 days per week.

#### ***For West Virginia students in grades 9 through 12***

High schools will attend school in-person unless their county is red on the DHHR

County Alert System map. In-person instruction may consist of blended learning models for students in grades 9-12.

Consistent with the practice that has been in place since the start of the 2020-2021 school year, high schools will move to remote learning the day after the county turns red on the DHHR County Alert System map.

High schools may stay in remote learning until the following Monday.

If the county is not red on the DHHR daily map on Saturday, in-person instruction will resume on the following Monday.

A county superintendent may determine and direct that a county will resume in-person learning without waiting until the following Monday.

If the county is still in red status on Saturday or Sunday, remote learning will continue for another week unless the county superintendent directs the resumption of in-person instruction earlier

A local county board of education retains the authority to work with local health officials and to close individual classrooms or schools when a specific health need related to that classroom or school is identified irrespective of the county's color on the DHHR County Alert System map. Such closures shall be of limited duration and related to the specific health need of the school or classroom.

Even when a county is red on the DHHR County Alert System map, teachers and staff will continue essential student support services including meals, student engagement, all special education services and support to at-risk students.

***Further:***

Every Monday, the state superintendent shall provide the WVBE with an update regarding each county's status regarding the provision on in-person instruction via email.

The state superintendent, WVDE staff, and all county-level education leaders are directed to continue to provide educational information about the benefit and safety of the COVID vaccination to teachers, education staff, and community members and residents throughout the state.

- II. Consider and approve the Superintendent's recommendation to "Stay the Course", as of January 19, 2021, all schools will remain with the 4-day in-person instruction, same 1:30 p.m. dismissal schedule and Wednesdays time to work with remote students.

- III. Adjournment:

Signed this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021.

"S/James Flesher, President, Lewis County Board of Education."

The meeting was called to order by James Flesher, Board President.

The board met in special session at 3:00 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Dr. Robin Lewis, Superintendent.

The board discussed the return of students due to Covid-19.

Phyllis Hinterer made a motion and Kenny Lowther seconded the motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to "Stay the Course", as of January 19, 2021, all schools will remain with the 4-day in-person instruction, same 1:30 p.m. dismissal schedule and Wednesdays time to work with remote students. James Flesher amended the motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to "Stay the Course", as of January 19, 2021, all schools will remain with the 4-day in-person instruction, same 1:30 p.m. dismissal schedule, Wednesdays time to work with remote students in the event that the county alert system shows us in the red on Saturdays then the high school will close per the state's directive and grades K-8 will go with Group 1 and 2 Schedule. Phyllis Hinterer voted to not amend her motion. Ms. Hinterer wants her motion to remain the same with the addition if the WVDHHR County Map on Saturday's shows red then the high school will close the following week. David Bush seconded this motion. Mr. Holden asked for a roll call vote. David Bush, Phyllis Hinterer and James Flesher voted in the affirmative. Mike Holden and Kenny Lowther voted in the negative. Motion passed with a 3-2 vote.

On motion by David Bush and seconded by Kenny Lowther, the board adjourned at 3:38 p.m., with a 5-0 vote.