The Pocahontas County Board of Education met on Tuesday February 17, 2026, for a Board Meeting at Pocahontas County Board conference room, in Buckeye, WV at 6:00 PM.

Members:
Emery Grimes, President
H. Samuel Gibson – Absent- Arrived at 6:18 PM
Dr. Sue Hollandsworth, Vice President
Morgan G. McComb
Andrew "Frosty" McNabb

Meeting called to order.
Opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

DELEGATIONS:

Bev Gragg – Presented a petition concerning the removal of Mr. Sam Gibson due to his social media posts. It has come to our attention that Mr. Gibson has publicly posted content on social media and online that many in our community find rude and offensive and inconsistent with the professional standards expected of someone entrusted with overseeing the education and well-being of our children. Members of the board of education are public representatives who should model respect, integrity and professionalism both in public settings and online. The language and tone used in these online posts undermine public trust, create division within the community, and reflect poorly on the school system as a whole. Our schools should be safe, inclusive, and respectful environments, and those in leadership positions must always uphold these values. For the reasons, we respectfully request that the appropriate authorities conduct a formal review of Mr. Gibson's online conduct and determine whether this behavior violates board policies, ethical standards or codes of conduct and take appropriate action up to and removal from the Pocahontas County Board of Education. This petition is not motivated by personal disagreement but by a collective concern for maintaining professionalism, accountability, and respect within our educational leadership. We urge swift and thoughtful action in the best interests of our students, families, and community. There are paper petitions out in the community and online. He was asking what half-time show everyone was watching and then made a profane comment about Kirk. He also made comments about shooting a woman in the face, and then his daughter posted comments about their family life.

Dr. Williams presented a prepared statement. She stated that she hears and acknowledges your concerns and understands them. I want to be thoughtful about what I will express tonight. Therefore, for purpose, clarity, and transparency, I would like to address the questions that have raised concerning the removal of an elected member of the county board of education. Even beyond tonight's delegation I have received questions as to why I or the board members have not removed Mr. Gibson from the board of education. First as the Superintendent, I am appointed by the board of education and serve at the will and the pleasure of the board of education. I serve as the secretary of the board of education and have no legal authority to remove a board member, sanction a board member or take any adverse action against a board member nor do any of the other board members. I answer to the board members. Under WV code 18-5-1A, members of the board are elected by the voters of the county and serve fixed terms established by law. The authority to alter that membership or term does not rest with the Superintendent or the other board members. But if the removal of a county officer including a

member of the board of education, this is governed in WV code 6-6-7. It does not rest with the Superintendent or the board. While I want to also ensure the board president and the other board members, viewers and our delegation, I will remain committed to supporting lawful governance and an effective functioning of this board, while I am secretary of this board and Superintendent of this county. I do not have the legal authority to do as people have requested, nor do the board members. I hear your concerns and I acknowledge your concerns. Thank you for understanding my role in this situation.

RECOGNITIONS:

A. Regional Science and Engineering Fair –

First Place -Division II/Engineering Which Action Performs Best?
Noah Sharp Ethan Jones

Division II/Material Science Fruit Vs. Fabric
Jennifer Taylor

Division II/ Physics and Astronomy Radio Reflections
Brayden Ray

Second Place – Division I/Animal Science Musical Scales
Fenna Marks

Division I/Engineering How Does a Lightbulb Potato Work?
Annabel Swan

Division II/Engineering Antibiotic effects on common kitchen spices
Lane Wilfong

Division II / Earth and Environmental Sciences Speed Meeting
Madalyn Rittenhouse Noah Arbogast Lucas Sutton

Third Place

Division I / Chemistry What soap makes the biggest bubble?
Jonah Mann Sadie Brown

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT UPDATES:

A. GBEMS: LSIC/School Improvement Updates (Attendance,

Behavior and Academics) Student achievement: Last year they had a jump in Overall Proficiency for the 2024-2025 school year. Their ELA pass rate was 33%, math 36% and science 27%. In the 2023-2024 school year they were 347 out of 368 elementary schools, in the 2024-2025 school year they moved to 245 out of 368. The middle school for the 2023-2024 school year we were 159 out of 169 and in the 2024-2025 school year we are 2024-2025 we moved up 27 places to 132 out of 169. When we looked at our strategic plan, we decided to continue the path to increase or exceed ten percent in ELA and Math. The benchmarks one and two showed third through eighth grade. The first benchmark showed 13% level that meets or exceeds; the most recent shows 22% meets or exceeds. Some background on this comprehensive test is the testing should show the lowest level at the beginning of the year with the highest level on the last benchmark and hopefully be prepared for the WV Summative growth assessment. In math the first benchmark was 10% with the most recent at 24%, science started at 14% and the most recent was 25% and we are headed in the right direction. Every student is in a

reading or math intervention. The elementary is getting intervention almost every day and the middle school is getting the intervention Monday, Wednesday, Friday the first nine weeks and it changes the rotates the next nine weeks. Green Bank has identified the bubble students, and they have provided targeted and focused intervention for these students that is thirty minutes every day. They have shared the scores with these students and met individually with each student. They have also set individual student achievement goals. The after-school program has the highest attendance of students with 23 on average. This is an additional help for the students. Soon their intervention will start concentrating on test taking strategies.

Attendance: The strategic plan for attendance is to be less than 29% for chronically absent students by the third nine weeks, which will be a ten percent decrease. Year-to-date attendance as of October 30th was 92.5% and chronic absenteeism was 25.49. The current attendance as of February is 93% and chronic absenteeism has dropped to 17.33%. That has been a very conscious effort on the part of the staff. Green Bank has held seven SAT meetings for students missing five or more days and has two more upcoming events. Ms. Jordan talked about the initiatives that helped them reach the attendance goals. They had the Mountaineer come by and talk to the students about the importance of attendance. They do a lot of prizes for attendance through community in schools and sometimes they will switch it up and do the most improved in a class. At Green Bank if they have 95% attendance for the day at 10:00, there is a dance time. In the fall, they had a drawing for football tickets. Students with 95% attendance or higher were put in a drawing, and the winner got to go to the games for free. The local business partners that work with the school provide appetizers or ice cream. They give a lot of weekly shout outs and switch up what is recognized. They also have a display in the hallway that shows weekly attendance by homeroom that comes with a traveling trophy. Attendance has been a big focus. If students aren't present, we can't teach them.

Discipline: The goal is to decrease our referrals and lunch detentions by 15% for the academic school year. Last year Green Bank had 237 office referrals, year to date they had 59. Ms. Jordan states that the next few months usually have the highest amounts of discipline issues. Classrooms have the highest number of incidents. The most common issues are disrespect and inappropriate conduct. They purchased a program called Live School where they document the PBIS and hopefully put more emphasis on positive rather than punitive. A couple of things they did through PBIS are they explicitly taught the expectations at the beginning of the year. They posted the expectations by location throughout the building. Ms. Jordan created an office managed vs. teacher managed behaviors because she felt there were some things she felt could be handled in the classroom and it has helped the teachers distinguish what deserves an office referral. Teachers are visible in the hallways, and the cafeteria is still the hardest area to manage. The teachers are using DoJo to be very proactive in the classroom and not reactive.

Glows – Green Bank is special because of its strong partnership with the Green Bank Observatory and programs like the science fair, Nature's Mountain Classroom trips, STEM nights, and educational projects such as the Math video. The school also hosts Harvest Day, Field Day, and events like Veteran's Day and Christmas programs, while the band performs football games and parades. Faculty and staff build long-term relationships with students and families, supported by an active PTO, volunteers, and strong community involvement. The Learning Beyond the Bell program, now three days a week, provides additional support for students.

B. Superintendent Updates: Benchmark 2 – I-ready platform data on the county level. The data below reveals improvement in most grade levels and school levels. The chart below illustrates

the number of students at the two lowest performance levels (two or more grade levels below). It compares benchmark one scores to benchmark 2 scores and shows the number of students that either increased or decreased in the lowest performance levels.

Location	Reading			Math		
	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2		Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	
All Schools	107/368	83/370	-24	76/308	64/363	-12
GBE/MS	42/119	40/124	-2	40/116	33/119	-7
HES	10/56	7/58	-3	7/56	3/58	-4
MES	35/184	35/187	-0	29/136	28/186	-1

The chart below shows data by school and grade level for benchmark 1 and benchmark 2.

Green Bank Elementary Middle School

GBE/MS	Reading			Math		
	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2		Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	
Kindergarten	0	0		0	0	
First	5	3	-2	8	6	-2
Second	6	5	-1	6	4	-2
Third	12	8	-4	7	5	-2
Fourth	7	10	-3	9	9	0
Fifth	6	8	-2	10	9	-1

Hillsboro

Hillsboro	Reading			Math		
	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2		Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	
Kindergarten	0	0		0	0	
First	0	0	0	0	0	0
Second	3	1	-2	2	2	0
Third	3	3	0	0	0	0
Fourth	0	0	0	1	0	-1
Fifth	4	3	-1	4	1	-3

Marlinton

Marlinton	Reading			Math		
	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2		Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	
Kindergarten	0	0		0	0	
First	1	0	-1	1	1	0
Second	6	5	-1	7	3	-4
Third	10	10	0	14	10	-4
Fourth	10	8		5	4	-1
Fifth	14	12		2	10	-8

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

Consent Agenda Items

A. Approval of the AGENDA

A. Payment of Bills – Subject to additions, deletions, or Other changes prior to the board meeting.
   - **a.** Payment of Vendor Listing = **$379,530.61**
   - b. Payment of P-card = **$ 101,231.74**
   - **c.** February 3, 2026 Employee Payroll = **$281,186.85**
   - d. Grant Awards
   - e. Budget Adjustments

D. Budget Transfers and Supplements – Subject to Additions, deletions, or other changes prior to the Board Meeting.

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

Personnel Matters: See the attached file.

Discussion of Pocahontas County Schools personnel may involve an Executive Session as provided in W. Va. Code §6-9A-4(b)(2)(A) [personnel exception] and/or §6-9A-4(b)(6), [privacy exception]. The Board majority must vote to have an Executive Session (no action will be taken during the Executive Session).

Professional:

~~_____ Teacher of Title I Green Bank Elementary/Middle School **Position: 54757 Green Bank Elementary/Middle School**~~

~~_____ Teacher of Special Education- Green Bank Elementary/Middle **Position: 54759 Green Bank Elementary/Middle School**~~

~~_____ SPED Teacher's – Pocahontas County High School **Position: 48563 Pocahontas County High School.**~~

~~_____ SPED Teacher – Pocahontas County High School. Position: **54763 Pocahontas County High School.**~~

~~_____ Teacher of Science – Green Bank/Elementary Middle School **Position: 53516 Green Bank Elementary/Middle School**~~

Professional: 5

Service Recommendations:

Angela Vandevender Secretary II/Accountant II at Pocahontas County High School effective for the 2026-2027 school year pending successful background check. **Position: 57322 Pocahontas County High School**

Of the following as Substitute Secretary/Accountant for Pocahontas County Schools, at state basic service personnel salary, for the 2025-2026 school year, as needed:

Emily Sharp

Position: Service 0

Extra-Curricular Recommendations:

Other Recommendations: (subject to additions and deletions prior to the board meeting)

SUPERINTENDENTS UPDATES:

A. General Updates

a. Facilities Update on Projects – ESG – Earlier this school year, the Board approved three projects: Board office upgrades, a boiler at Hillsboro Elementary, and hot water heaters at Marlinton Middle School. During routine maintenance, staff discovered that Hillsboro's boiler was leaking. They added a seal and installed the new boiler, giving the school a backup system for the first time. At Marlinton Middle, the old hot water heaters were replaced with electric units. Some crossover issues affected kitchen and restroom hot water, but the problem was tracked down and fixed. The Board office upgrades include sliding windows in the front office and between the front office and the Personnel Director's office for confidentiality and visibility, with blinds installed as directed by the state. The Board also recommended Central Office remodeling after school projects were completed. Mr. Duane Gibson reported that gym window repairs at Hillsboro are planned but delayed due to weather. The repairs at Pocahontas County High School have made a noticeable difference for both the building and school morale.

b. Discussion Major Improvement Project – The Superintendent and Mr. Gibson have the opportunity to submit another Major Improvement Grant to the School Building Authority (SBA) That grant must be between $50,000 and a million dollars. There will need to be 20%. We will make this request from our CEFP plan based on priority. Because of the guidelines, we cannot resubmit the HVAC project at the High School. The project that will be submitted will be for the roof replacement at Marlinton Middle School. The projected cost would be about 1.1 million. Some funding will come from the local county funds account. The board is going to submit the grant request soon.

Typically, they look at what percentage the county is providing. Mr. McNabb clarified with Mr. Gibson that the gym floor at PCHS was part of a MIP grant along with an additional amount from Governor Justice. The administration is constantly applying for grant money from the state. Mr. Sam Gibson brought up the lockers at Marlinton Middle School. There were several suggestions made about options for lockers at MMS and the High School.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Discussion and Action: Makeup days from Inclement Weather – Possible Days for consideration (3-30-4/3 & 6/15). We reached out to each principal to discuss with their staff about which order and days they wanted to use for the makeup days. The vote was to start on March 30, 31 and move forward. We have three days to make up, and three OSE days left. There is no direct guidance from the WVDE that those days will be forgiven.

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

New Business

A. Approval of Fundraisers
B. Approval of Out of County, Out of State and Overnight Field Trip
C. Discussion: WV Board of Education Removes Pocahontas County's State of Emergency Status. Superintendent Williams - February 12 marked the beginning of a new chapter for the Pocahontas County School system. This is no small achievement. Interventions for school systems often last for three to seven years. What we have accomplished in that short time is extraordinary. This milestone belongs to everyone involved in the school system and community. I am incredibly proud of all of you, the dedication, resilience, and our belief in our students made this possible. This is a beginning to move forward with clarity, confidence, and purpose. We recommit ourselves to our theme "Stronger Together." We will continue to calibrate our work, align our vision, and sharpen our focus as we move from intervention to excellence with a bold goal of becoming the number one school system in the State of WV. Our geography is not a barrier but a blessing. It has preserved a wholesome way of life rooted in values, relationships, and community. It creates a small community like atmosphere where every student is known and every child cherished. This is not just special but powerful. Those qualities are not limitations, but they are a competitive advantage against the other counties in the state of West Virginia. They are a formula for greatness and success. I am deeply honored to serve as your Superintendent as we begin the climb to the top together. Thank you everyone for your hard work and board members for your support, vision and for your belief in our county school system and our students. Your efforts have made all the difference. Thank you for

believing in our mission and each other. We are stronger together and the best is yet to come.

MATTERS OF THE BOARD:

Mr. Sam Gibson: We are about 2/3 of the way through the school year. He asked about the update on the playground at Marlinton Elementary School with the donor. He would like to see us start a soccer team at Middle School. Mr. Gibson asked about the green space behind Marlinton Elementary School and if there was anything we could do with it.

Mr. Emery Grimes: He said he didn't realize how bad things were. They were fed a bed of roses. The state of emergency revealed how bad it was and put the spotlight on the system. The state of emergency showed the true situation and gave us a checklist to start fixing the issues. He explained what a state takeover would have meant for our county. Dr. Williams rolled up her sleeves and started working through the process of bringing the county out of the state of emergency. It makes you proud to be a WARRIOR.

Dr. Sue Hollandsworth: Someone told her that she put four students through high school, and not one of them said they weren't prepared when they got to college. We must have solid elementary and middle schools to have a successful high school. We cannot forget that the solid foundation that leads to the High School.

Mr. Morgan McComb: He is thankful for the strong leadership and the things that Dr. Williams is doing--is best for the students. Poor leadership is what got us where we were, and strong leadership is leading us out. Someone that stood up and took the criticism but still followed the policy to lead. The whole county owes her a "Thank You."

Mr. Andrew "Frosty" McNabb: I think it's a time for celebration. Great things are happening and it's starting to get brighter. We need to enjoy the victory and then move forward. He sat in on the first session of the safety meeting yesterday during the Professional Development. The staff has bought in, and we have started reaping the benefits from it.

The next Board of Education Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, beginning at 6:00 PM at the Board Conference Room in Buckeye, WV.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Teresa G. Williams
Secretary

President