

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE TO WIT:

The Hampshire County Board of Education held a special meeting, their sixteenth (16th) meeting of the 2021-2022 school year on Wednesday, November 3, 2021 at John J. Cornwell Elementary.

The following Board members were in attendance: Miss Debra Ann Champ, President; Mr. Ed Morgan, Vice President and Mr. Bernard Hott, Mrs. Deadre Rinker and Mr. Matthew Trimble, members.

President Champ called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Prayer was given by President Champ followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. Superintendent Pancione recommended that Board members approve the agenda.

Mr. Trimble moved approval with Mrs. Rinker seconding the motion that passed unanimously.

II. PURPOSE OF SPECIAL MEETING:

The purpose of this meeting was to hold an official closure hearing at the school that was proposed for closure – John J. Cornwell Elementary.

Public Hearing for John J. Cornwell Elementary: The closure of John J. Cornwell Elementary grades 3-5 at the end of the 2021-2022; beginning with the 2022 school year, students enrolled at John J. Cornwell Elementary, will be reassigned to Romney Elementary and Slanesville Elementary.

The Hampshire County Board of Education voted on the proposed school closure following delegations. The Board conducted all deliberations in open session and the vote was taken in open session following the Board's deliberations.

III. DELEGATIONS:

Speakers had the opportunity to address the proposed closure and provide evidence related to the proposal.

President Champ asked "are there any speakers?"

There was one speaker who had signed up previously, Gayle Allen, Kindergarten Teacher at Springfield-Green Spring Elementary.

Mrs. Allen – "Today I want to speak to you because this may be the last time I can publicly speak about the incredibly misguided idea of closing good small community schools. (She is retiring on June 30, 2022.) As some of you know, I grew up in New Jersey and was schooled in the New Jersey public schools. First, I went to very small rural elementary schools in Martinsville, New Jersey.

Then, my family moved to the suburbs of New Jersey and I was just one in hundreds of children in a middle school and thousands in high school. When I started teaching here in Hampshire County, I worked at Slanesville Elementary where I was the only 3rd grade teacher. Next, I moved here to John J. Cornwell Elementary and taught in this community for about 9 years. During this time, Mill Creek Elementary and Grassy Lick Elementary schools were closed leaving these communities feeling hurt and lost. The statement says that students attending John J. Cornwell Elementary will be reassigned to the student population at Romney Elementary and Slanesville Elementary. I am here to suggest the addition of Springfield-Green Spring Elementary. This is a small school. Some parents may want the choice to send their children to another small school. At least give parents a choice whether or not they want to transport their child. Give them an option to bring them to the last remaining small school until the consolidation. Don't say it as only Romney Elementary or Slanesville Elementary. Thank you."

IV. NON-CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

A. Superintendent Pancione recommended that Board members approve the closure of John J. Cornwell Elementary grades 3-5; at the beginning of the 2022 school year the students attending John J. Cornwell Elementary will be reassigned to the student population at Romney Elementary and Slanesville Elementary.

President Champ stated that she was a huge proponent of small schools. With the removal of pre-k, then 1st and 2nd grade she said that "too much toothpaste had been pushed out of the tube" – there was no going back.

Mr. Hott stated that his grandchildren attended John J. Cornwell Elementary. "I like this school. I said that I would never vote to close this school but unfortunately things have changed. I do like the option to include Springfield-Green Spring Elementary as a choice for parents".

Mr. Trimble moved approval to close John J. Cornwell Elementary with Mr. Morgan seconding the motion that passed 4-1. President Champ voted no.

B. Superintendent Pancione recommended that Board members approve the amendment to the CEF (Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan) that includes the closure of John J. Cornwell Elementary.

Mrs. Rinker moved approval with Mr. Trimble seconding the motion that passed 4-1. President Champ voted no.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p. m.

Jeffrey Pancione, Secretary
Hampshire County Board of Education

Debra Ann Champ, President
Hampshire County Board of Education