



West Virginia's
Transformative
System of
Support for
Early Literacy
A Report of Progress

December 2020





**West Virginia Board of Education
2020-2021**

Miller L. Hall, President
Thomas W. Campbell, CPA, Vice President
F. Scott Rotruck, Financial Officer

Robert W. Dunlevy, Member
A. Stanley Maynard, Ed.D., Member
Daniel D. Snavelly, M.D., Member
Debra K. Sullivan, Member
Nancy J. White, Member
James S. Wilson, D.D.S., Member

Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Ph.D., Ex Officio
Chancellor
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education

W. Clayton Burch, Ex Officio
State Superintendent of Schools
West Virginia Department of Education

Table of Contents

Closing the Early Literacy Achievement Gap in West Virginia via the WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading.....2

Infrastructure to Support the West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.....5

Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy7

West Virginia’s School Readiness Efforts.....7

West Virginia’s Early Learning-Focused Attendance Efforts 11

West Virginia’s Summer and Extended Learning Efforts12

West Virginia’s High-Quality Pre-K through Grade 3 Classroom Instruction Efforts 14

Promoting Professional Growth: Leaders of Literacy Podcast Episodes..... 18

COVID-19 Implications..... 22

for School Readiness..... 22

for Summer and Extended Learning Efforts..... 22

for Pre-K through Grade 3 High-Quality Classroom Instruction..... 23

West Virginia’s Next Steps: Looking forward through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic 24

Closing the Early Literacy Achievement Gap in West Virginia via the WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading

West Virginia’s third grade literacy efforts serve as a catalyst for the development and subsequent growth of a comprehensive approach to early learning in West Virginia for children ages birth through third grade.

The West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading has been developed to assist all 55 West Virginia counties in closing early literacy achievement gaps in West Virginia.

These efforts are supported by the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Board of Education, Governor Jim Justice, the West Virginia Legislature, and all 55 school districts.

This systemic process has been designed to ensure the success of all young children in West Virginia, and focuses on four major components:

- » School readiness
- » School attendance
- » Extended day and extended year (summer) learning
- » High-quality classroom instruction

Family engagement is interwoven throughout each major component of the West Virginia’s transformative system of support for early literacy.

Selected Local, Regional, State, and National Partners Engaged with West Virginia’s Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy:

Early Childhood Advisory Council of West Virginia	Attendance Works
AmeriCorps Energy Express	West Virginia Public Education Collaborative (PEC)
June Harless Center for Rural Education and Research	Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library
National Campaign for Grade Level Reading	Marshall University’s College of Education and Professional Development
National Institute for Early Education Research	National Governor’s Association
West Virginia Birth to Three	National Summer Learning Program
West Virginia Library Commission	Read Aloud West Virginia
West Virginia Reading Association	West Virginia Head Start State Collaboration Office (Head Start and Early Head Start)
West Virginia Public Broadcasting	West Virginia DHHR, Division of Early Care and Education
West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network	

About West Virginia's comprehensive and transformative system of support for early literacy

“West Virginia children deserve the highest-quality services and opportunities that will help them establish a love of literacy and a love of learning early in life. An approach that targets all areas of a child’s development is necessary to help close literacy achievement gaps in our state by the end of third grade. West Virginia’s Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy (the West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading) aims to achieve the goals necessary to allow all children the chance to become proficient readers, writers, speakers, and thinkers. All stakeholders have a role in this charge, and it is important that everyone in our state understands how each child, beginning at birth, deserves the opportunity to be successful in school and set on a trajectory for lifelong success.”

— W. Clayton Burch, West Virginia State Superintendent of Schools

“Established by West Virginia Code and State Board of Education Policy, the components of West Virginia’s Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy focus on local flexibility and local decision making to determine which supports are most needed to best serve the children in each unique community, school, or program. Each West Virginia county has an early literacy team that examines data and develops partnerships with community organizations, private businesses, libraries, and several other groups to make the connections necessary to help all children have opportunities for literacy growth and achievement.”

— Dr. Monica DellaMea, Director, Early and Elementary Learning, West Virginia Department of Education

“An alarming number of children—about 67 percent nationwide and more than 80 percent of those from low-income families—are not proficient readers by the end of third grade. This has significant and long-term consequences not only for each of those children but for their communities, and for our nation as a whole. If left unchecked, this problem will undermine efforts to end intergenerational poverty, close the achievement gap, and reduce high school dropout rates. Far fewer of the next generation will be prepared to succeed in a global economy, participate in higher education, or enter military and civilian service.”

— Ralph Smith, Managing Director, National Campaign for Grade Level Reading

WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading annotated timeline of major events

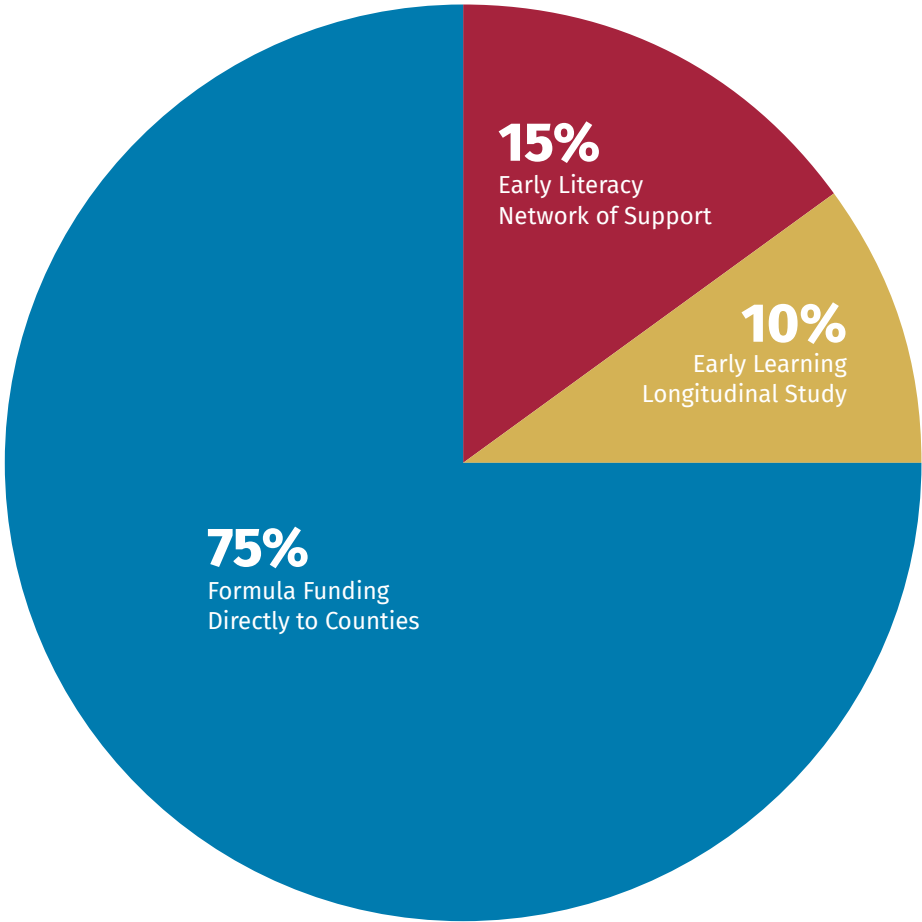
Month	Component	Results
March 2014	Passage of HB 4618 resulted in the revision of W.Va. Code §18-2E-10	State code reflects a transformative system of support for early literacy.
October 2014	WVBE approval of a revised version of WVBE Policy 2512: Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy	State policy supports county and state use of a transformative system of support for early literacy.
June 2015 and annually thereafter	Early Literacy Action Plans from all 55 counties approved for FY 16	Upon review of individual strengths and gaps, County Grade Level Readings Teams proposed how they will utilize allocated funding to achieve the goals outlined in WVBE Policy 2512: Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy.
July 2015 and annually thereafter	Formula funding available for all 55 counties	County Grade-Level Reading Teams leverage funds to focus on one or more component of the campaign to increase 3rd grade literacy proficiency
	Early Literacy Network of Support Grant awarded to Marshall University's June Harless Center for Rural Education and Research	The June Harless Center collaborates with the WVDE Office of Early & Elementary Learning to design an early literacy network of support. Five early literacy specialists provide capacity-building models of coaching for teachers to increase the rigor of high quality standards focused reading instruction; technical assistance to County Grade-Level Teams; and other supports to ensure the success of the Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy.
August 2015 and annually through August 2019	Longitudinal (5 year) study of the impact of high-quality early learning programming on later achievement begins (conducted by National Institute for Early Education Research [NIEER] in collaboration with Marshall University).	Study aims to determine how high-quality early learning programming impacts 3rd Grade literacy proficiency. Yearly, results are shared to target instructional deficits in the early grades.

Infrastructure to Support the West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy focuses on four primary components:

- » High-quality classroom instruction
- » School Readiness
- » School Attendance
- » Extended day and extended year programming

While primarily focused on district-level funding based on indicated needs via county early literacy action plans, the \$5.7 million annual allocation awarded to support the Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy is also inclusive of components to support the longevity and success of the overall campaign. A breakdown of funding follows:



All (nearly **100,000**) West Virginia children in grades pre-k through three are impacted yearly by the programs and services made available by this legislative allocation.

FY 2019-2020 Early Literacy Allocations by County

County	FY 20 Allocation	County	FY 20 Allocation
Barbour	\$39,017	Mineral	\$64,735
Berkeley	\$291,781	Mingo	\$80,044
Boone	\$63,055	Monongalia	\$159,563
Braxton	\$36,081	Monroe	\$28,177
Brooke	\$30,882	Morgan	\$33,748
Cabell	\$206,501	Nicholas	\$61,852
Calhoun	\$15,671	Ohio	\$79,103
Clay	\$33,789	Pendleton	\$14,737
Doddridge	\$17,781	Pleasants	\$16,300
Fayette	\$105,974	Pocahontas	\$17,222
Gilmer	\$13,270	Preston	\$69,020
Grant	\$25,008	Putnam	\$129,194
Greenbrier	\$78,370	Raleigh	\$198,098
Hampshire	\$47,332	Randolph	\$68,117
Hancock	\$62,374	Ritchie	\$22,407
Hardy	\$39,287	Roane	\$34,023
Harrison	\$165,220	Summers	\$26,297
Jackson	\$68,925	Taylor	\$38,192
Jefferson	\$125,749	Tucker	\$15,245
Kanawha	\$419,520	Tyler	\$20,672
Lewis	\$44,168	Upshur	\$63,887
Lincoln	\$63,817	Wayne	\$112,007
Logan	\$91,555	Webster	\$24,638
Marion	\$124,066	Wetzel	\$42,401
Marshall	\$72,523	Wirt	\$17,526
Mason	\$66,722	Wood	\$199,732
McDowell	\$56,866	Wyoming	\$60,742
Mercer	\$162,017	West Virginia	\$4,265,000

FY 20 allocation funding formula:

- » 50%: Head count enrollment Pre-K-3
- » 50%: Head count low SES enrollment Pre-K-3

Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy

West Virginia's School Readiness Efforts

Why is school readiness a critical component of West Virginia's transformative system of support for early literacy?

Many children from low-income families begin school already far behind. The research shows that these children are less likely to be read or spoken to regularly or to have access to books, literacy-rich environments, high-quality early care, or pre-k programs. As a consequence, these children may hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their middle-income peers before reaching kindergarten. Research also shows that such interactions are critical for language development, an important precursor to literacy.

61 percent of low-income children have no children's books at home.

Children from poverty hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

A child's vocabulary as early as age three can predict third grade reading proficiency.

A Comprehensive Framework to Support Children and Families:

School Readiness includes the transitions for families, schools and communities to work together to provide all children opportunities to succeed and become lifelong learners. West Virginia's Universal Pre-K program serves as the original catalyst that led to the development of a statewide comprehensive approach to early learning. For more information about school readiness in West Virginia, visit www.readysetgovv.com.



Ready, Set, Go! WV is a framework to help individuals understand and support the various transitions in which young children engage prior to and after school entry. Established to support kindergarten readiness, Ready, Set, Go! WV was expanded to ensure that all young children should be afforded opportunities to transition successfully into and out of early childhood settings prior to the first grade. Provisions of the school readiness framework include a holistic view that supports young children's development across domains, as well as transition strategies to support children and families as they enter school.

The Framework's focus on children



West Virginia Universal Pre-K: High-quality Programming for Early Learners



West Virginia Universal Pre-K continues to serve as a high-quality opportunity for young children throughout the state whose families choose to enroll them in school as 4-year-olds (or as 3-year-olds with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)).

76% OF 5-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTNERS participated in West Virginia Universal Pre-K during 2018-2019.

West Virginia's Universal Pre-K Program meets 9 OF 10 QUALITY BENCHMARKS, as evidenced in the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) State of Preschool 2019 Yearbook. Other national rankings are reflected below:

ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCES RANKINGS	
4-YEAR OLDS	3-YEAR OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
8TH <i>in the nation</i>	15TH <i>in the nation</i>	8TH <i>in the nation</i>	4TH <i>in the nation</i>

The State of Preschool 2019 – State Preschool Yearbook – National Institute for Early Education Research – www.nieer.org

https://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/West_Virginia_YB2019.pdf

Find My West Virginia Pre-K Program

Find My West Virginia Pre-K is an online resource that allows families or other interested individuals the opportunity to view pertinent information about each West Virginia Universal Pre-K classroom by West Virginia county and community.

This resource has been particularly helpful over the years for families who are looking to see where the best placement for their pre-k aged child might be based on the services (i.e., before and after school, etc.) they might need. To learn more about local West Virginia Universal Pre-K availability and logistics, visit <https://webtop.k12.wv.us/find-my-prek/>.



West Virginia Universal Pre-K System of Support

The West Virginia Universal Pre-K System of Support (S.o.S.) is an ongoing system designed to support county collaborative early childhood teams in the implementation of WV Universal Pre-K. The S.o.S. is comprised of four key events planned throughout each school year to support local teams in pre-k implementation:

- » Introductory Workshop for New County Collaborative Early Childhood Core Team Members;
- » WV Universal Pre-K Leadership Institute;
- » WV Universal Pre-K Leadership Webinar Series; and
- » WV Universal Pre-K Leadership Spring Meetings

For more information, visit <https://wvde.us/early-and-elementary-learning/wv-universal-pre-k/collaborative-team-resources>.

Ensuring Access to Text in the Home Through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library



Built on a well-established body of research that solidifies the critical importance of young children having access to text early on, the West Virginia Imagination Library Program provides a free, high-quality children's book to approximately 40% of the state's birth through age 5 population (approx. 40,000 children) each month from birth to their fifth birthday. This program is operated via

a partnership with The Dollywood Foundation and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which provides well over a million books to children worldwide each month.

The West Virginia Department of Education also partners with Marshall University's June Harless Center to manage operations with The Dollywood Foundation for the West Virginia program.

Currently, a state line item, coupled with state early literacy funding and some small-scale partnerships and donations, comprise the funding stream for this program. Examples of partnerships and donations in place include local-level collaborations with hospitals, United Way organizations, and other public and private entities.

Approximately \$750,000 is allocated annually between these funding streams to provide high-quality children's books to over 39% of the birth-5 population across all (or sections of all) 55 counties.

This equals over 474,000 books per year for West Virginia's earliest learners.

“Marion County participates in the local hospital newborn program. The Marion County Board of Education provides new parents with information on developing an early literacy foundation. The parents receive a tote containing the “Baby’s First Library” (10 books appropriate for newborns). A packet is also included with information from WV Birth to Three programs, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library application, a resource guide for families of young children, and articles on the benefits of reading to your newborn.”

— Gina DeLorenzo, Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator, Marion County Schools

Imagination Library by the numbers (as of October 31, 2020):

Total of all eligible WV children (ages birth-5)	100,229
Percentage of eligible WV children enrolled	39.46%
Total children receiving books through Imagination Library in October 2020	39,547

More than a “Book Giveaway”: Imagination Library’s Implementation Model to Develop Literacy at Home

Implementation Model

Based on Imagination Library Research Findings and Literature Review



Source: <https://imaginationlibrary.com/news-resources/research/>

“Local physicians are provided with pamphlets to discuss the importance of early reading and developmental skills to the families with infants, toddlers and preschoolers. A strong partnership with this community partner will increase the number of families we are able to educate but unable to see. Physicians will also be provided books to be given to 1-6 year olds at each well child check-up. Additional books will be given at sick visits.”

— Amy Cole, Title I Coordinator, Roane County Schools

Why is school attendance a critical component of West Virginia's transformative system of support for early literacy?

Research has found that one in ten kindergarten and first grade students nationwide misses nearly a month of school each year in excused and unexcused absences. By fifth grade, children with chronic absences from low-income families have lower academic achievement.

One in ten kindergarten students miss nearly a month of school every year. In some districts, it runs as high as one in three.

Kindergarteners who miss 10 percent of school days have lower academic performance when they reach first grade.

Among children from low-income families, who lack the resources to make up lost time, chronic absence in kindergarten translated into fifth grade achievement.

When children are at school, they learn critical content needed to progress in their schooling. West Virginia Campaign for Grade-Level Reading staff work with county attendance directors and other members of county early literacy teams to promote the importance of attending school every day.

Staff are also members of a cross office and cross agency work group that is focusing on lowering chronic absenteeism statewide. For more information about attendance in West Virginia, visit the West Virginia Balanced Scorecard at wveis.k12.wv.us/essa/dashboard.html.

Strategies from the Field to Encourage School Attendance for Young Learners:

“Our pre-k and kindergarten teachers complete home visits at the beginning of each school year. We focus on attendance with a locally written “book” about the importance of attendance with information from Attendance Works. This year, because of COVID-19, our teachers had each child and one parent or family member come to the school individually for socially-distanced visits.”

— Nancy Hanna, Associate Superintendent, Greenbrier County Schools

“We (in Nicholas County) are focusing on keeping back and forth contact with families and providing support to students as well as teachers during this unprecedented time. We are sharing resources that are available to students while learning in person or remotely.”

— Sarah Keiper, Title II Special Education Early Childhood Specialist Coach, Nicholas County Schools

Why are summer and extended learning opportunities a critical component of West Virginia's transformative system of support for early literacy?

Without access to the enriching activities available to more affluent peers, research shows that children from low-income families lose as much as three months of reading comprehension skills over the summer. By the end of fifth grade, they are nearly three grade levels behind their peers.

Low-income students lose an average of more than two months in reading achievement in the summer, while their middle-income peers tend to make gains in reading.

By the end of the fifth grade, disadvantaged children are nearly three grade equivalents behind their more affluent peers in reading.

Studies show 6-week summer learning programs can produce statistically significant gains in reading performance.

Selected examples of local-level summer and extended learning partnerships

Many partnerships are currently in place at the local level to promote extended day and extended year learning opportunities:

- » Summer reading and/or transition programs of sufficient duration and intensity, such as Americorps Energy Express, Early Literacy Instructional Support, and Summer Jump Start kindergarten transition programs.
- » Summer "Read and Feed" mobile libraries, tutoring, and/or feeding sites to reach some of the most impoverished areas of the state.
- » Early and elementary summer library programs in which free children's books are often provided to participants.
- » Students' self-selection of a variety of 5-12 (or more) books for their home libraries, given to them at the beginning of the summer (funded by counties, WV Read Aloud, and/or other organizations).
- » Summer enrichment opportunities: including STEAM buses, STEM camps, and other family engagement programs.
- » County partnerships with food pantries to provide books and other literacy resources to families when they pick up food.

Strategies from the Field to Address Extended Learning Opportunities for Young Learners:

“In order to help prevent the “summer slide,” Grant County provides students in grades pre-k through sixth grade with self-selected books for summer vacation. Also, Grant County offers an Energy Express program each summer.”

— Vanessa Harlow, Director of Elementary Education and Federal Programs, Grant County Schools

“Doddridge County Schools partners with the WVU Extension Office to incorporate STEAM instructional activities to the existing Extended Day and Extended Year learning opportunities. Additionally, the district will continue to implement the early learning Extended Year and Kindergarten Academy to reduce summer slide, as well as further develop areas of critical needs. Also, Doddridge County Schools will continue to provide transportation to all Extended Learning Opportunities to create awareness and attendance. Students in PK-2 will receive Summer Reading Take Home Packets that will expose students to grade level fiction and nonfiction text while encouraging students to read, think, and reflect while engaging in reading activities with their families.”

— Mallory James, County Reading Specialist, Doddridge County Schools

“Morgan County Schools conducts a six week summer program called Camp MoCo. Pre-K through 5th grade students are invited to attend. Students get two new books each week and work on a variety of activities related to the book and theme. We incorporate meals, movement, mathematics, and science in this camp”

— Kandy Pentoney, Director of Pre-K and Elementary Curriculum, Morgan County Schools.



Hancock County’s story book cafe bus allows children to access books remotely to assist with summer learning loss.

Why is high-quality classroom instruction a critical component of West Virginia’s transformative system of support for early literacy?

High-quality English language arts instruction during the early learning years involves immersion in a literacy-rich environment to develop awareness and understanding of spoken and written language. Through active participation and developmentally appropriate and engaging learning experiences, students develop competencies in reading, writing, listening, speaking and media literacy. To support the development of lifelong learning and global awareness, students are given regular opportunities through developmentally appropriate contexts to participate in language experiences, utilize 21st century skills, and equally employ literary and informational texts of appropriate complexity.

Instruction-focused initiatives to support early literacy for elementary educators, instructional coaches, support personnel, elementary principals, and county early literacy team members:

Utilization of Early Literacy Specialists (collaboration with Marshall University’s June Harless Center that provides five specialists who serve as extensions of the WVDE to assist with local-level professional learning, technical assistance, etc.). Early Literacy Specialists conduct county-level early and elementary learning-focused professional learning and technical assistance, provide county early literacy team support, and develop applicable early and elementary-focused resources.

Leaders of Literacy Menu of Professional Learning Services: Provision of targeted professional learning and technical assistance based on West Virginia content standards and research-based best practices; wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Menu-of-Services-with-Remote-Learning-Sessions.pdf. This menu provides descriptions of professional learning opportunities that are already designed and/or could be tailored to fit a county or schools’ needs regarding the following topics:

The Science of Reading	Phonological Awareness	Concept of Word
Word Study	Phonics	Building Knowledge and Vocabulary
Comprehension	Fluency	Text Sets
Vocabulary	Building Oral Language	Writing Overview
Writing Foundational Skills	Writing Organization Structures	Writing Content
Developmentally Appropriate Kindergarten Practices	Differentiated Instruction	Small Group Instruction
Instructional Coaching	Overview of the WV Campaign for Grade Level Reading	Remote Learning

Creating a Warm, Engaging Remote Classroom	Importance of Social-Emotional Well-Being During Remote Learning	Scheduling the Remote Elementary Classroom
Learning to Read Remotely: Phonological Awareness & Phonics Instruction	Teaching Comprehension Remotely	Using a Virtual Gallery to Engage Students
Teaching Writing Remotely	Remote Coaching versus Traditional Coaching	Other sessions as requested

Strategies from the Field to Address High-Quality Instruction for Young Learners:

“Hardy County has hired a Literacy Specialist to coordinate literacy instruction practices with administrators and teachers of K-Grade 3 students. The Literacy Specialist supports teachers in the following ways: modeling instruction, providing resources, observing and offering feedback, and leading professional development. This has been instrumental in moving instruction to a more consistent, cohesive, expectation-focused delivery of early literacy best practices”

— Kathy Hardy, Literacy Specialist, Hardy County Schools

“Our educators complete peer observations. We are our best resource. We then debrief after observations using a common rubric and set of questioning techniques which allow us to deeply examine our practices. We also complete this same task with Schoology digital lessons.”

— Dawn Dooley, Director of Elementary Schools and Assessment, Fayette County Schools

“Our interventionists have conducted Teams meetings with students virtually to provide services to students who are distance learners. In addition to providing services some teachers have been adding a weekly read aloud. A system is in progress for Read Aloud volunteers to do so virtually on a weekly basis for one elementary school.”

— Deborah Bever, Director of Federal Programs and Special Education, Ritchie County Schools

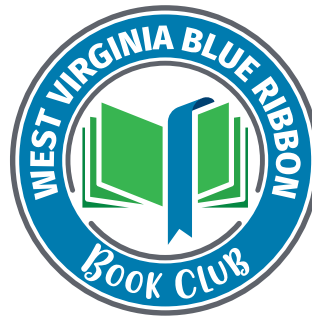
“We are getting all teachers in grades K-2 trained in LETRS (Literacy Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) and the science of reading. This includes supplies and materials needed for appropriate resources and screeners to give all students the appropriate foundational skills needed.”

— Kristin Giles, Executive Director of Elementary Education, Cabell County Schools

“We employ a Literacy Demonstration Teacher. This teacher typically travels to all 10 of our elementary schools working with teachers and classrooms on best practices in guided reading. This year has created some unique challenges for this position. The Demonstration Teacher has created a website full of literacy resources, many of which can be used with remote learners.”

— Aimee Henkins, Compliance Specialist, Federal Programs, Monongalia County Schools

West Virginia Blue Ribbon Book Club: Supporting Early Reading During the Summer Months



In June 2020, the West Virginia Department of Education launched the West Virginia Blue Ribbon Book Club, a partnership between the WVDE, the Marshall University June Harless Center, and The Dollywood Foundation. As part of the project, approximately 197,000 books were distributed this summer to children entering first and second grade during the 2020-2021 school year. First and second grade educators also received the books at their schools to promote and build on summer literacy activities when school resumed.

The Blue Ribbon Book Club provided early learners with a small library of high-quality books. Approximately 37,000 West Virginia children received a shipment of two books to their homes in mid-June and three additional books in mid-July. This project was developed to assist with summer and COVID-19 learning loss experienced by West Virginia children.

Family engagement resources to assist with use of the books, including extension activities and celebrity read alouds of each book can be found on the West Virginia Blue Ribbon Book Club website: wvde.us/wv-blue-ribbon-book-club.

“The partnership is the only one of its kind in the nation and West Virginia children who are in the process of learning how to read and are developing a love of reading will benefit tremendously. These may be the only books some children have in their homes, and we hope this will be the beginning of a lifetime of reading and learning.”

— W. Clayton Burch, State Superintendent of Schools



Accelerate West Virginia: Literacy-Focused Professional Learning for West Virginia Educators During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Overview: Funds have been provided by the Benedum Foundation (\$250,000) to assist the June Harless Center, in partnership with the WVDE, with literacy-focused efforts to benefit West Virginia children and educators as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to create virtual professional learning sessions (target of approximately 4 sessions per track) for educators to utilize during the 2020-2021 school year that will accelerate student learning to close the achievement gap exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Educators will be provided the opportunity to earn three non-degree credit hours in one of the following areas:

Options for Pre-K – Grade 5 Educators	Options for Grades 6-8 Educators
<u>Early Literacy Foundations</u> – This area will be divided into three tracks by programmatic levels: PK-K, 1-2, and 3-5. This option will include a focus on phonics, phonological awareness and fluency, and will be available to any educator working with students in Pre-K through 5th Grade.	<u>Key Components of Adolescent Literacy</u> – This option will include comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and writing development, and will be available to any educator working with students in grades 6-8.
<u>Comprehension and Content</u> – This area will be divided into three tracks by programmatic levels: PK-K, 1-2, and 3-5. Participants who choose this option will be engaged in learning about building knowledge and vocabulary related to the content areas with literary and informational texts.	<u>Disciplinary Literacy</u> – Participants will examine the unique literacy demands of each discipline and highlight the vital role that disciplinary literacy plays in adolescents’ overall literacy development.
<u>Early Literacy and STEM</u> – This area will be divided into two tracks by programmatic levels: PK-K, 1-2, and 3-5. Participants will learn how to integrate literacy skills with hands-on STEM experiences. Sessions will include ways to make STEM content come alive while improving literacy skills.	<u>Adolescent Literacy and STEM</u> – Participants will learn how to integrate literacy skills with trans-disciplinary STEM experiences. Sessions will focus on ways to make STEM content accessible to all students while improving literacy skills.

Audience: Any West Virginia educator working with student in grades pre-k through eighth grade. This includes, but is not limited to, general education teachers, Title 1 teachers, special education teachers, and academic coaches.

Timeline:

Fall 2020

- » Course development
- » Announcement of this professional learning series

Spring 2021

- » Live sessions will be accessible starting Spring 2021.
- » Participants will be expected to complete course work for non-degree graduate credit between the March 10 through April 27 course dates, where they will implement strategies they learned during the sessions.

Logistics:

- » **The price of 3 hours of non-degree credit hours has been negotiated through Marshall University’s graduate school for a cost of \$99.00** (Benedum funding will pay this for each participant).
- » Coursework will be housed on the WVDE Learning Management System.

Registration opens February 1!

For more information, contact Monica DellaMea, Director of Early & Elementary Learning at mdellamea@k12.wv.us or (304) 558-9994, or Joey Wiseman, Director of Middle & Secondary Learning at rjwisema@k12.wv.us or (304) 558-5325.



**CLAUDE
WORTHINGTON
BENEDUM
FOUNDATION**

Promoting Professional Growth: Leaders of Literacy Podcast Episodes



Listen. Create. Motivate.

Professionally curated podcasts on
School Readiness, Attendance, Extended Learning
and High-Quality Instruction



Initiated in early 2020, the Leaders of Literacy Podcast Series (wvde.us/leaders-of-literacy-podcasts) offers several podcast episodes focusing on one or more areas of the state's early literacy work.

Podcast episodes are geared toward West Virginia's educators to highlight the importance of ensuring West Virginia children have access to high-quality programs. Each podcast also has "Show Notes" that share the main messages permeated by each podcast episode.

Shared by the podcast series host are descriptions of selected 2020 podcasts that focus on the West Virginia Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Episode 1: Our Most Precious Investment

Being a leader of literacy involves so much more than helping children learn to read. This introductory episode details the West Virginia Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, the four crucial components for developing a solid literacy foundation, and the efforts to help every community in West Virginia develop as leaders of literacy.

Episode 2: Myth Busting Chronic Absence

Chronic absenteeism, or missing 10% or more of the school year, is a major issue that our schools, communities, and families face every day. This episode defines the term chronic absence, discusses the harmful effects chronic absence has on our students' academic success, and debunks common myths about chronic absence.

Episode 3: Interview with Molly Sigmon

Working to help families and children develop better attendance habits can seem like an overwhelming task. This episode is an interview with Molly Sigmon, a Communities in Schools Coordinator from Wyoming County, WV. Molly's passion to combat chronic absence is evident in the very inspiring, yet simple strategies that she uses at Berlin McKinney Elementary.

Episode 4: Ready, Set, Go! WV

School readiness begins at birth and is not just a set of skills that young children need to have in place prior to entering school. This episode is an interview with Lisa Fisher from the West Virginia Department of Education to define the meaning of school readiness. The hosts discuss the West Virginia school readiness framework, Ready, Set, Go! WV, and how it is reshaping the school readiness approach in the Mountain State.

Episode 5: Interview with Nancy Hanna

School readiness begins at birth and truly embodies the African proverb, “it takes a village to raise a child.” In this episode, Nancy Hanna, the Associate Superintendent for Greenbrier County Schools discusses school readiness and how Greenbrier County has pulled together their own village to provide school readiness support to local children.

Episode 8: Interview with Pooja Patel

Self-talk is a skill that children and adults alike use to persevere through challenging tasks. In this episode, the hosts interview Pooja Patel, an expert in self-regulated strategy development, to continue a conversation around self-talk and the impact that this skill plays both in and out of the classroom.

Episode 9: Childhood Trauma - Unlocking the Door to Learning

In this episode, the hosts define childhood trauma and trauma-informed classrooms. They discuss the initial steps educators can take to create a trauma-informed classroom that meets the needs of children suffering from trauma.

Episode 10: Interview with Amber Nichols

Remote learning is something that most educators have limited knowledge and experience in navigating, but something all educators are learning to navigate during the Covid-19 pandemic. Amber Nichols is a kindergarten teacher in Monongalia County, and in this episode, she shares tips and lessons learned on her remote teaching journey.

Episode 11: Interview with Anna Rowe

In this episode, the hosts interview childhood trauma expert and trainer, Anna Rowe. Anna’s experience both professionally and personally on childhood trauma gives her a unique perspective of this critically important topic that effects so many children.

Episode 12: The Power of Interactive Read-Alouds

Classroom “read alouds” have traditionally been part of the elementary classroom for a very long time. The practices of reading aloud have evolved into an interactive process with the power to increasingly enrich children’s literacy skills. Listeners will hear what interactive read alouds are and the power they have to develop children’s literacy skills both in and out of the classroom.

Episode 13: Interview with Kelly Bryant and Mimi Browning

All educators are learning to navigate the uncharted territory of remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. This episode follows the remote teaching and learning journey of two inspirational teachers, Kelly Bryant and Mimi Browning from Logan County.

Episode 14: Interview with Dawn Miller

Interactive read alouds are one of the most powerful practices that both educators and parents have to increase children’s vocabulary and knowledge about the world. In this episode, Read Aloud West Virginia’s Executive Director, Dawn Miller, discusses how the organization is spreading the practice, power and magic of interactive read alouds across West Virginia.

Episode 15: Summer Learning Loss and the Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic

This episode focuses on Summer Learning Loss and the projected effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on those losses.

Episode 16: Summer Learning Loss and the Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic

This episode is an interview with Bailey Cato Czupryk and Kate Glover from the non-profit organization The New Teacher Project (Tntp), about Summer Learning Loss and the projected effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on those losses. They discuss the research their organization has conducted and suggestions they have for teachers of early literacy.

Episode 17: Contrasting Realities: Culturally Responsive Education During School Re-entry

Currently, our world is full of contrasting realities and those differences will be evident in classrooms across West Virginia this school year. In order to improve the way in which we do “school” and to counterbalance these vastly different realities, educators can begin building their knowledge base about the educational inequities that students face. Listeners will hear a conversation centered around culturally responsive education and what educators can do to address educational inequities.

Episode 19: 21st Century Skills: A Close Look at Critical Thinking

In recent years, the workforce has changed at a rapid pace. To adapt to these changes, the world has realized that students need to be prepared for the careers of tomorrow. The focus in education has adapted to reflect this realization and as a result, the 21st Century Skills were identified. This episode introduces the 21st Century Skills students need to have to be successful in today’s world and the hosts have a deep conversation about the skill of critical thinking in particular.

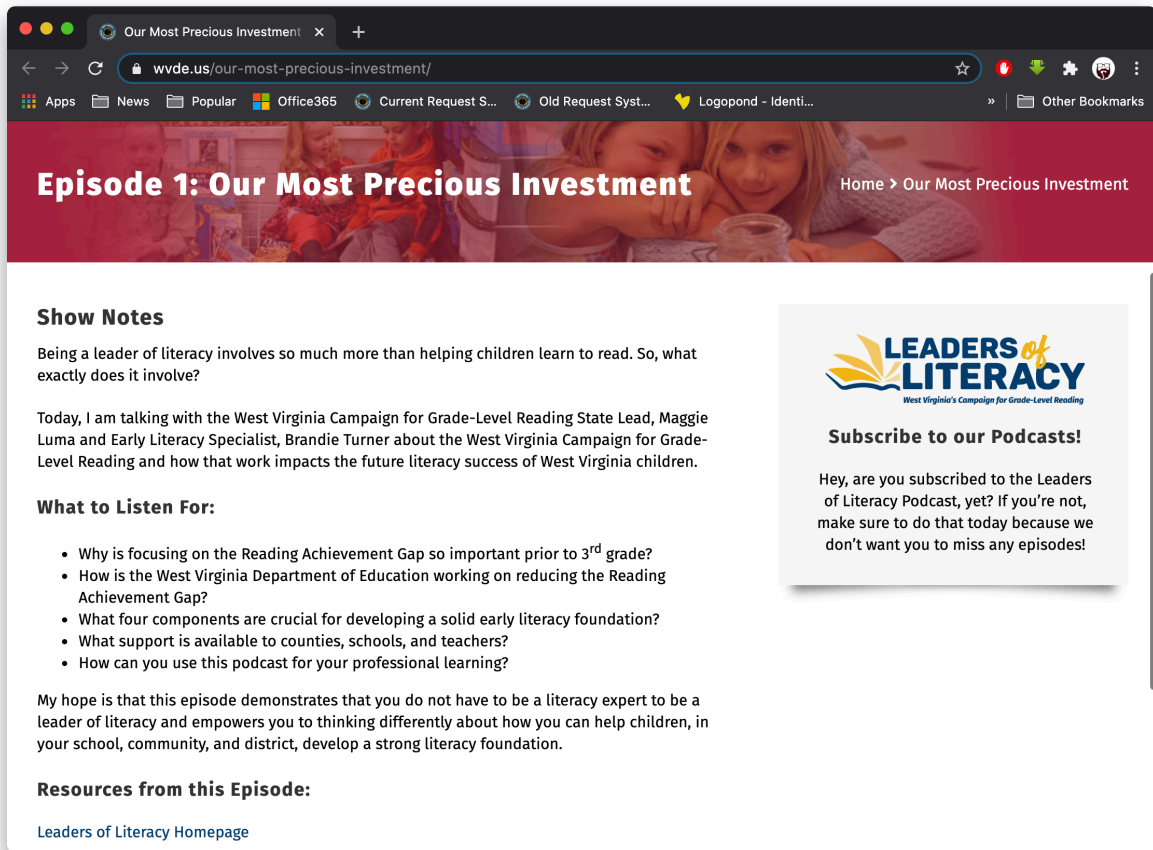
Episode 21: 21st Century Skills: A Close Look at Creativity

Lene Jensby Lange, an educational consultant from Denmark, talks to the hosts about creativity and how teachers can create innovative thinking in the classroom.

Episode 23: Accelerating Student Learning

Educators across West Virginia are continuing to face challenges surrounding the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on education. The biggest challenges are addressing the unfinished learning that occurred as a result of the school closures, while also ensuring that students are mastering current grade-level skills and standards. This episode highlights classroom instructional practices that can accelerate student learning in order to achieve grade-level proficiencies.

Sample Leaders of Literacy Show Notes



Our Most Precious Investment x +

wvde.us/our-most-precious-investment/

Apps News Popular Office365 Current Request S... Old Request Syst... Logopond - Identi... Other Bookmarks

Episode 1: Our Most Precious Investment

Home > Our Most Precious Investment

Show Notes

Being a leader of literacy involves so much more than helping children learn to read. So, what exactly does it involve?

Today, I am talking with the West Virginia Campaign for Grade-Level Reading State Lead, Maggie Luma and Early Literacy Specialist, Brandie Turner about the West Virginia Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and how that work impacts the future literacy success of West Virginia children.


What to Listen For:

- Why is focusing on the Reading Achievement Gap so important prior to 3rd grade?
- How is the West Virginia Department of Education working on reducing the Reading Achievement Gap?
- What four components are crucial for developing a solid early literacy foundation?
- What support is available to counties, schools, and teachers?
- How can you use this podcast for your professional learning?

My hope is that this episode demonstrates that you do not have to be a literacy expert to be a leader of literacy and empowers you to thinking differently about how you can help children, in your school, community, and district, develop a strong literacy foundation.

Resources from this Episode:

[Leaders of Literacy Homepage](#)



LEADERS of LITERACY
West Virginia's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Subscribe to our Podcasts!

Hey, are you subscribed to the Leaders of Literacy Podcast, yet? If you're not, make sure to do that today because we don't want you to miss any episodes!

COVID-19 Implications

for School Readiness

Reading to children and having books in the home matter!

An analysis (Bao, et.al., 2020) of the educational disruption to over 1.5 billion students worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the following findings:

- » The interruption to formal educational experiences causes adverse consequences on school-age children's academic outcomes
- » Kindergarten children without formal (in-person) education would gain 67% less literacy ability compared to those with formal (in-person) education. Compared to normal circumstances, kindergarten children whose parents cannot read to them daily would gain 5.1 points of literacy ability from Jan 1st to Sept 1st, 2020 due to COVID-19 school closures and lack of formal education.
- » **Researchers' analysis showed that reading books daily to children every day might mitigate 1.6 points or 31% of this potential loss.**
- » Educators and policy makers can promote this simple solution to facilitate literacy improvement during school closures, which may be a common occurrence as nations see the public health benefits of physical distancing for future pandemic outbreaks. <file:///C:/Users/mdellamea/Downloads/Literacy%20Loss%20in%20Kindergarten%20Children%20during%20COVID-19%20School%20Closures.pdf>

for Summer and Extended Learning Efforts

Researchers for the Northwest Evaluation Association project that coronavirus closures could lead to *much greater learning loss* in reading than usually occurs during the traditional "summer slide."

- » But with the stress and trauma that many students are experiencing during the shutdowns, it's possible that the effects could be even greater, says Emily Solari, a professor of reading education at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education and Human Development. And it's hard to say how foundational skills development, specifically, will be affected, she added.
- » Teaching students how to read words is always critical, she said, because they have to be able to read to succeed in every subject. But now, the stakes will be higher.
- » "Now that we have kids that have lost access to critical face-to-face instruction in reading ... this becomes even more urgent as we bring them back," she said.
www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/06/01/early-reading-instruction-takes-a-hit-during.html
www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/05/Collaborative-Brief_Covid19-Slide-APR20.pdf
- » The WVDE, The Dollywood Foundation, and the June Harless Center provided a small library of children's books to more than 37,000 first and second graders and their teachers during the summer of 2020 to help mitigate summer learning loss (see page 16).
- » County early literacy teams are encouraged to utilize early literacy and other funds to provide summer learning programs for children to help slow summer learning as well as COVID-19 learning losses.

for Pre-K through Grade 3 High-Quality Classroom Instruction

A few of the additional projects that support high-quality instruction include:

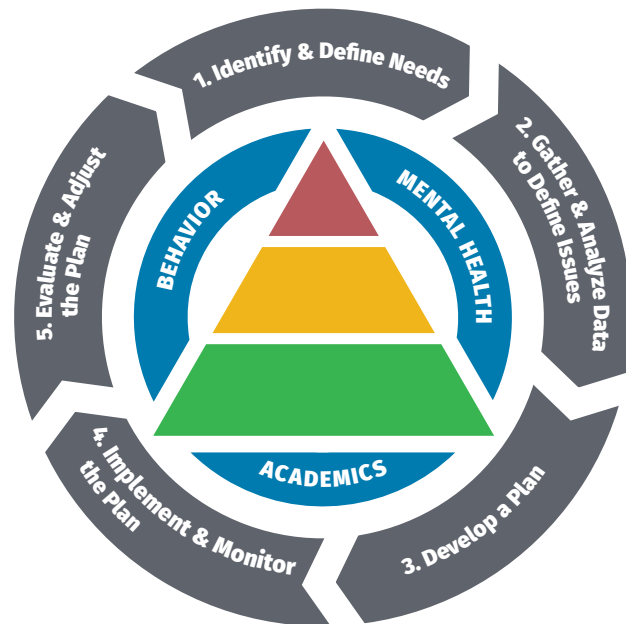
- » Implementation of the Accelerate WV Early and Adolescent Literacy Professional Learning Project (see page 17);
- » Implementation of virtual elementary literacy and mathematics coaching academy cadres;
- » Implementation of the WV Tiered System of Support (tiered system to support all learners; focuses on all areas of children’s development);



The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) is committed to ensuring equitable education opportunities that include high-quality resources, strategies, and practices. The West Virginia Tiered System of Support (WVTSS) is a framework which suggests flexible use of resources to provide relevant and appropriate academic, behavioral, and mental health support to enhance learning for all students.


WVTSS is characterized by a **seamless system of high-quality practices allowing all students to sustain significant progress**, whether they are considered at-risk, exceeding grade-level expectations, or at any point along the continuum.

The WVDE has made an intentional shift in terminology to a “multi-tiered system” to emphasize **the integration of academics, behavior, and mental health as uniformly critical to student success**. WVTSS focuses on the cohesive system of support rather than interventions alone.



- » Availability of Phonological Awareness and Language Screener (PALS) at no charge to WV districts for Pre-K–grade 3.

West Virginia's Next Steps: Looking forward through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic

 *The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted both the fragility and importance of the early education and care sector in the United States, with serious, widespread consequences and unprecedented changes for children and families across the globe.”*

— Stephanie Jones, Gerald S. Lesser Professor of Early Childhood Development, Harvard University
www.gse.harvard.edu/news/20/08/early-learning-study-harvard-releases-new-data-covid-19-and-early-education

The West Virginia Department of Education, with its numerous local, state, and national partners, will continue to provide a system of support to help ensure the overall well-being and success of all children. Early literacy-focused work over the next year will:

- » Focus intensively on all areas of the Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy (W.Va. Code 18-2E-10), which is supported by West Virginia Department of Education Policy 2512: Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy.
- » Provide professional learning and technical assistance for high-quality, standards- based classroom literacy-focused instruction that is grounded in research-based science of reading concepts and pedagogy.
 - › Explore virtual professional development and coursework opportunities for teachers related to the science of reading
 - › Expand efforts with a Coaching Academy by using a virtual platform to support academic coaches, elementary principals, and others who work directly with early and elementary educators
 - › Focus on accelerating learning (versus remediation) due to in-class instruction lost as a result of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic
 - › Share MetaMetrics Lexile resources
 - › Emphasize the need for professional learning opportunities in writing instruction as evidenced by the grade 3 West Virginia General Summative Assessment
- » Expand West Virginia Imagination Library statewide to ensure that all children in the state ages birth through five have access to text in the home.
- » Increase registrations for the Imagination Library program to ensure more children in the state have the opportunity to have books in the home from birth through age five
- » Expand the West Virginia Early Literacy Network of Support to include a partnership with the West Virginia Public Education Collaborative (PEC) at West Virginia University to build upon the successes and continued collaborative efforts of the June Harless Center at Marshall University.

- » Collaborate with the June Harless Center to provide Virtual Instructional Support Specialists (otherwise known as academic coaches) to help build educators' understanding for heightened implementation of developmentally appropriate, research-based, and standards-aligned literacy strategies for all learners.
- » Strengthen the home to school connection to keep children engaged with literacy during times when they are not in school through efforts such as:
 - › Utilize a Family Support Specialist who will work directly with districts, communities, and other programs to develop a systemic approach for family engagement
 - › Develop resources (toolkits, newsletters, tip sheets, etc.) for families regarding child development, learning standards, early literacy, early numeracy, and other applicable topics
- » Partner with various agencies to increase provider competence and expertise with high-quality literacy instruction and environments that occur out of school, such as during the summer and before/after school.
- » Utilize findings from the West Virginia Early Learning Longitudinal Study #1 to develop a voluntary Continuous Quality Improvement process for grades K-3.
- » Partner with West Virginia Institutions of Higher Education to further infuse best practices for early literacy into educator preparation programs.
- » Serve as a technical advisor and partner with the WV PEC and Benedum Foundation's Sparking Literacy grant application process and project implementation.
- » Collaborate with WVDE Communications and partnering agencies to increase transparency and promote sharing of literacy-focused promising practices for educators and families through the Leaders of Literacy website, social media, Leaders of Literacy Podcast Series, and other venues.

For more information –

visit the Campaign for Grade-level Reading website at wvde.us/early-and-elementary-learning/wv-leaders-of-literacy-campaign-for-grade-level-reading, or contact Dr. Monica DellaMea, Director, Early and Elementary Learning, West Virginia Department of Education, at mdellamea@k12.wv.us.



W. Clayton Burch
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools