

# Board Of Education Hears Reports; Approves MOU

The Webster County Board of Education met in a work session Monday night, hearing reports, reviewing offers of assistance, and other updates.

District treasurer Brandi Burnett provided the board with an update on the December account balances and shared information related to the district's latest audit report. Burnett told the board that the audit reflects a clean opinion before she shared several items of pertinent information that appears in the district's newest audit. In FY 2025, the district had receipts of \$32.5 million with 30.6 million in expenditures. The treasurer also noted that the audit reflects district accomplishments which include the bonding project, roof projects, secure entrances and other work on facilities. The auditors found no significant deficiencies, no non-compli-

ance issues and noted that the district has followed the laws regarding bookkeeping and reporting financial matters of the district. No deficiencies were noted for federal compliance and the district is considered a "no risk auditee" according to the report. The audit management letter notes that the district is "doing an excellent job" with no non-compliance issues.

In addition to the audit report, the board was also provided a copy of the Annual Financial Report and the balance sheets.

In his comments following Burnett's report, superintendent Aaron Harrell told the board, "A clean audit is not an accident," as he commended Burnett and the school bookkeepers for their work in keeping school and district accounts correctly. "I appreciate that," Harrell said. Other business to

come before the board, all of whom were in attendance Monday night, was a \$21,100 KETS offer of assistance. The board is expected to accept those funds at their regular meeting on January 26.

In her comments, Burnett advised the board that she has provided them with a copy of the FY 2027 draft budget that is required to be reviewed and submitted to the state by the end of January. She stressed the importance of the draft budget as the district begins working on the first budget cycle of the FY 27.

In other budget matters, Harrell shared that the district will soon receive a SFCC construction offer of assistance in the amount of \$18,475. Those state funds are offered every two years for building and construction projects.

In academic related matters, assistant

superintendent Dawn Forker and each school principal shared information related to their goals and strategies for moving student progress forward this year. Forker noted that principals and teachers develop their School Improvement Plans to set their goals and strategies based on state assessment data to improve student progress. Each school is required to target reading and math with options to also focus on state results in science, social studies and writing, English Learner progress and post-secondary progress.

According to the principals of all four elementary schools, the focus on reading and math proficiency improvement is at the forefront of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Each principal presented their school's focus points and the goals they have set for increasing their school's proficiency in both reading and math. In the most recent round of state assessments, Webster County students improved proficiency in both areas, but principals what to see those proficiency numbers continue to increase. Teachers are analyzing student work, providing individualized instruction, hosting intervention blocks, T2T and PLCs to help students achieve their educational/academic goals. At WCHS and WCATC principals shared goals and percentages related to college and career ready and graduation rate, all of which continue to

rise at those levels.

Board Chair Tim McCormick express his pleasure and appreciation for the the work the high school and area technology center are doing together to support student progress.

In his reports Monday night Harrell presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the district and the Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education that insures the district is following the guidelines and security protocols set by the DOE. Harrell told the board that the district's IT department is following the rules and regulations set forth by the state; he added that attorney Roy Massey has reviewed and okayed the agreement that deals with secure student records and it is ready for board approval. Before Monday night's meeting adjourned, the board approved the document.

During his comments, Harrell also noted that January is school board member appreciation month. He added that the wanted to "publicly thank all of you (board members) for the work you do on behalf of our students." Harrell added that the board members will be celebrated at the January 26, school board meeting.

The only other business to come before the board was a discussion on the district's mowing contract. At their December 16, meeting, Harrell and Greg Bowles presented a proposal to increase the number of properties

mowed by a contracted company. Presently, that company mows the district's outlying properties including the elementary schools in each community. With the retirement of a grounds and maintenance employee who was responsible for the mowing on the Dixon campus and the board office, Harrell suggested it might be more cost effective to add those properties to the mowing scheduled with an outside resource.

On Monday night, the superintendent presented quotes from two mowing companies for taking care of all mowing for 32 weeks annually. The district would save several thousand dollars by outsourcing the work rather than pay salary and benefits to an individual to do part of the work. RKC Outdoors and Precision Mowing both work with the district now, one with outlying mowing and the other on the athletic fields. The superintendent said the district has a good working relationship with both entities. Harrell presented both proposals and also told the board they could opt to rebid the district's mowing contract. He noted that the district is looking for high quality work so that the district no longer has to worry about "grass." The board concurred and will move forward with re-bidding the district's mowing contract.

The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m. with the board's next meeting set for January 26, at 4:30 p.m.

## Webster County Sheriff Issues Patrol Reminder

Between the dates of January 7, 2026 and January 31, 2026, the Webster County Sheriff's Office will be involved in proactive enforcement patrols. In an effort to enhance highway safety in Webster County, the Sheriff's Office will target areas of high traffic safety issues including impaired driving offenses. The Webster County Sheriff's Office has the following pre-approved traffic safety checkpoint locations:

1. US 41A North at KY 56 and KY 873
2. KY 109 North of Clay at the 10 Mile Marker
3. KY 56 East at Old Beech Grove Road
4. KY 109 at KY 670
5. KY 56 West between New Cedar Grove Church Road and Lyce Duncan Road
6. US 41A South at KY 270
7. US 41 South at KY 147
8. KY 132 East at KY 494

These locations incorporate checkpoint locations established by

the local Kentucky State Police Post, with additional locations added due to ongoing issues related to traffic safety concerns and impaired driving, identified by local data.

To promote public safety through public information and education, the Webster County Sheriff's Office will release a monthly notice of the potential areas targeted with traffic safety checkpoints. The exact dates and times of checkpoints will not be provided.

In an effort to keep a driver's time delays at an absolute minimum, we request drivers encountering a traffic safety checkpoint have their seatbelt on and their operators license, proof of insurance, and registration receipt readily accessible. A typical traffic safety checkpoint should have a traffic delay of 30 seconds to a few minutes to drivers.

Motorists are encouraged to slow down, focus on defensive driving, drive sober, and wear their seatbelts.

## Start The New Year Right: How To Develop A Practical Budget

**By Vicki Shadrick  
Extension Agent  
for Agriculture and  
Natural Resources**

### Named To Dean's List

In recognition of academic performance, the Office of Academic Affairs at University of the Cumberlands has announced that Kaitlyn Trainer of Sebree has been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester.

To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours (a full course load), maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50 for the semester, and be in good academic standing.

University of the Cumberlands is one of the largest and most affordable private universities in Kentucky. Located in Williamsburg, Kentucky, Cumberlands is an institution of regional distinction offering quality undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and online degree programs.

Year's resolutions is to get your finances in order, creating a budget is the perfect place to start. A well-planned budget not only helps you manage your money today but also sets you up for long-term financial success.

### Why Budgeting Matters

Think of a budget as a roadmap for your money. It helps you plan how to spend and save while giving you a clear picture of where your dollars go. Before you begin, track your expenses for at least a week—longer if possible. This simple step can reveal surprising spending habits once essentials like housing, utilities, and transportation are covered.

### Steps To Build Your Budget

1. Calculate Your Monthly Net Income  
This is the amount you take home after taxes and deductions.
2. List Your Monthly Expenses  
Break these into two categories:
  - Fixed expenses:

housing, car payments, subscriptions.

- Flexible expenses: groceries, clothing, personal care, and other variable costs.

3. Account for Periodic Expenses

Items like property taxes, car tags, and maintenance can strain your budget if not planned for. Add up these annual costs, divide by 12, and set aside that amount monthly in savings.

4. Subtract Expenses from Income

This calculation shows whether you need to adjust spending and how much you can save. Tools to Help You Stay on Track

Budgeting doesn't require fancy tools—a pencil and paper work just fine. However, spreadsheets like Excel or online templates and apps can make the process easier. Remember, a budget is a living document that should be updated regularly as your financial situation changes.

For more tips or personalized guidance, contact the Webster County Extension Office.

## WCWD Board Meets In Short Session

The Webster County Water District Board met Thursday in a short session that included hearing the final production report for 2025 and discussing the need to upgrade some equipment at the water plant in Onton. All members except Chris Cates were present for the meeting.

Water superintendent Trevor Baldwin presented the December and end of the year water production numbers. That report shows that the district produced 26,663,535 gallons less water in 2025 than in 2024 but sold 14,205,027 gallons more in 2025 reflecting a good ending to the year. In December, production stood at 28,541,016 gallons of water produced with 24,807,960 gallons of that amount begin sold. Baldwin told the board the numbers reflect well for

the district.

In other business, Baldwin asked board members to begin thinking about upgrades at the water plant, noting that some of the equipment is starting to see some decline." He added that the equipment is 26 years old and the district needs to consider replacing some of the equipment and instruments. The board asked that Baldwin keep them informed of the needed upgrades,

The only other business to come before the board was the approval of the minutes of the December meeting and approval of the vouchers.

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m. with the next board meeting scheduled for February 12, at 10:00 a.m.

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