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# The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

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WEDNESDAY, AUG. 6, 2025



The Parkersburg City Park pool was open free to the community from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday for the National Night Out annual event. Parkersburg held its ninth annual National Night Out on the first Tuesday of August.

## A Night Out

Parkersburg Police Department dives into community relations with event at City Park

By **AMBER PHIPPS**  
Staff Reporter

**PARKERSBURG** — The Parkersburg Police Department held its ninth annual National Night Out on Tuesday with an evening focused on building community and having fun.

Hosted at City Park, the event included games from 3 to 5 p.m. with the splash pad open from 5 to 8 p.m. Entry to the swimming pool was free to the public for the evening as part of the campaign.

“It’s a national event that encourages interaction between the police and the community,” said Parkersburg Police Chief Matthew Board, adding they’ve involved the fire department and EMS as well.



**ABOVE:** Firefighters with the Parkersburg Fire Department helped show kids how to drive the firetruck at National Night Out on Tuesday. **BELOW:** The splash pad at the Parkersburg City Park was open from 5 to 8 p.m. for free for those attending the National Night Out on Tuesday.



Police with the Parkersburg Police Department met with the community at the pool during National Night Out on Tuesday.



## Wood County BOE names new AD for Williamstown High School

By **DOUGLASS HUXLEY**  
Staff Reporter

**PARKERSBURG** — Jacinda Taylor has been selected as the next assistant principal and athletic director for Williamstown High School after being approved by the Wood County Board of Education Tuesday night by a 3-2 vote.

Taylor has previously been serving as the middle school athletic director for the district since 2023. She was also a kindergarten teacher for 14

years, she coached basketball at Blennerhassett Middle and Franklin Elementary schools, and was an assistant softball coach at Parkersburg South High School.

“I plan to keep the winning tradition going at Williamstown,” Taylor said. “Jill (Bryant, former athletic director and current principal at Williamstown) has done a tremendous job and I hope to



Porter

continue what she’s done.”

The board also welcomed Valissa Porter as director of special education after she was appointed to the position during the July 29 special meeting.

“Congratulations, Valissa, I know you weren’t here last week, but we’re glad you’re here with us now,” Board President Justin Raber said. “and we wish you and Jacinda the best in your positions.”

Douglass Huxley can be reached at [dhuxley@newsand-sentinel.com](mailto:dhuxley@newsand-sentinel.com)



Jacinda Taylor, right, was approved by a 3-2 vote by the Wood County Board of Education Tuesday night as the new assistant principal and athletic director for Williamstown High School. Taylor has been the middle school athletic director since 2023.

Photo by Douglass Huxley



## West Virginia sees largest drops in student enrollment in the nation

By **STEVEN ALLEN ADAMS**  
Staff Reporter

**CHARLESTON** — Driven in part by the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing since, student enrollment at West Virginia’s public schools saw some of the largest drops in the nation.

According to a June report by the Reason Foundation, a libertarian public policy research non-profit, West Virginia was one of four states that saw its public school enrollment drop by more than 5% during a four-year period between fiscal years 2020 and 2024, overlapping with much of the COVID-19 pandemic.


West Virginia started fiscal year 2020 with 263,486 students enrolled in public schools, but that number dropped to 246,883, losing 16,603 students during that four-year period. During that same period, public school enrollment nationally fell by 1.28 million students, or 2.5%.

While some public school systems in other states saw small increases in enrollment in the most recent years since the start of the pandemic, West Virginia is not one of those states. The Reason Foundation cited information from the National Center for Education Statistics showing that West Virginia was one of three states with the largest public school enrollment declines between fiscal years 2023 and 2024, with a 1.7% enrollment decline.

According to the report’s authors, West Virginia’s enrollment decline was not solely due to COVID-19 and predated the pandemic.

“For some states, the pandemic aggravated existing declines in public school enrollment,” wrote Aaron Garth Smith and Jordan Campbell. “From the 2012 to 2020 fiscal years, states like New Hampshire (-7.6% drop in enrollment), West Virginia (-6.9%), and Illinois (-6.7%) lost considerable percentages of their public school student populations.”

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