



**WISCONSIN RAPIDS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

John A. Krings, President  
John Benbow, Jr.  
Troy Bier  
Christopher Inda  
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz  
Elizabeth St. Myers  
Julie Timm

May 13, 2024

**REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

LOCATION: District Board Office, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494  
Conf Rm A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Christopher Inda, John Krings, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Elizabeth St. Myers, Julie Timm

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Brian Oswald, Ronald Rasmussen

President John Krings called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

None.

School Showcase – Mead Elementary School

Mead Elementary Principal Amber Applebee and Student Engagement Facilitator Kim Akey presented on school initiatives occurring to help students be as successful as possible. They reviewed the strong social emotional learning program established in the 2021-22 school year which was a focus for 2021-22 and 2022-23 after emerging from the COVID pandemic. The school has transitioned to a stronger academic emphasis in 2023-24, and a plan has been developed at the building to remove barriers and increase student success rates on District and State tests. Components of the plan were shared along with statistical results which indicate they are headed in the right direction. Video footage of students describing their love of reading was also shared. The Board thanked Ms. Applebee and Ms. Akey for their informative presentation and efforts at Mead to help students be successful.

Student Representative Report

Sarah Panzer reported on:

- The Jerry Marshall Olympiad Awards were recently held with 36 students receiving recognition
- A grades 6-12 Strings Festival concert is occurring on May 13, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Lincoln fieldhouse
- The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Cool to Be Kind Interact Club “Rise to Remember” event is happening on May 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center
- A Lincoln Band concert is scheduled to occur on May 20, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
- Scholarship Night for Lincoln High School seniors is scheduled to occur on May 22, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center
- The Lincoln High School graduation ceremony is scheduled to occur at 1:00 p.m. on June 2, 2024 at the WoodTrust Field

President Krings presented special recognition to Sarah Panzer for her two years of service as Student Representative to the Board during the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, thanking her for her service.

Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to approve special Board of Education closed session Board meeting minutes of March 5, 2024 and two special closed session Board meeting minutes of March 19, 2024; special open and closed session Board meeting minutes of April 1, 2024; special closed session Board meeting minutes of April 3, 2024; regular Board meeting minutes of April 8, 2024; special closed session Board meeting minutes of April 16 and 17, 2024; Board Organizational meeting minutes of April 22, 2024; special open and closed session Board meeting minutes of April 22, 2024; special closed session Board meeting minutes of May 2, 2024; and special open and closed session Board meeting minutes of May 6, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.**

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – May 6, 2024. Report given by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Educational Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- ES-1 Approval of proposed K-12 Art Education Curriculum Maps as presented, beginning with the 2024-25 school year.
- ES-2 Approval of the proposed K-12 Art education acquisition as presented in an amount not to exceed \$135,000.00 to be funded through the WRPS Referendum Curriculum budget.
- ES-3 Approval of the proposed modifications to the LHS Student Handbook for the 2024-2025 school year.
- ES-4 Approval of the proposed modifications to the WRAMS Student Handbook for the 2024-2025 school year.
- ES-5 Approval of the proposed modifications to the elementary agenda planner inserts for the 2024-2025 school year.
- ES-6 Approval of the 2024-2025 Professional Development Plan as presented.
- ES-7 Approval of the proposed Professional Development Day Calendar for the 2024-2025 school year.
- ES-8 Approval of the proposed partnership with UW-Green Bay to offer the courses presented as Project Lead the Way courses to receive college credit through UW-Green Bay's College Credit in High School Program beginning with the 2024-25 school year.
- ES-9 Approval of the Pupil Nondiscrimination Self-Evaluation Report.
- ES-10 Approval of the purchase of Gaggle Therapy for the 2024-25 school year for a total cost not to exceed \$50,000.00 using ESSER III, Mental Health Grant, and Stronger Connections Grant funds.
- ES-11 Approval of the contract with Renaissance Learning to renew FastBridge, STAR Reading, and STAR Math for three years, and to renew the EduClimber Data Warehousing Software for one year at a total cost of \$238,100.10 to be paid through ESSER III grant funds.

John Benbow requested that Consent Agenda Item ES-3 be held out.

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items ES 1-2 and 4-11. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

With regard to Consent Agenda Item ES-3, Board members had raised some questions at the Educational Services Committee meeting around the language concerning drugs on page 20 in the handbook. Principal Ronald Rasmussen presented additional edits to this section to address concerns as well as page 23 to address vaping concerns. Board members had an opportunity to ask questions about the suggested edits.

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the proposed modifications to the LHS Student Handbook for the 2024-25 school year, including additional revisions to page 20 regarding drugs, and page 23 regarding tobacco/vape pens. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz provided updates and reports on:

- The Committee was apprised on the results of a K-12 District Literacy Audit that was conducted during 2023-24 by CESA 5. Summaries and key findings of the audit were shared and discussed.
- Upcoming student travel plans to Germany, Washington D.C., Seattle, WA and Orlando, FL were shared.

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the May 6, 2024 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. Business Services Committee – May 6, 2024. Report given by John Benbow.

Mr. Benbow reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Business Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- BS-1 Approval of the revised 10-Year Facility Plan.
- BS-2 Approval of a quote received from Wheelers Chevrolet to purchase a 2024 work truck for \$48,495.00 to be paid from the 2023-24 Buildings and Grounds budget.
- BS-3 Approval of the purchase of 8 – Husqvarna Automowers, charging stations, and GPS systems at a cost of \$40,471.20 to be paid from the 2024-25 Buildings and Grounds budget.
- BS-4 Approval of the proposed changes to Board Policy 375 – Student Activity Funds Management and 375 Rule – Student Activity Fund Management Guidelines for first reading.
- BS-5 Approval of the purchase of 18 sections of wrestling mats from Resilite Company at a cost of \$26,943.84. The WRAMS wrestling club activity account will contribute \$9,000, Wisconsin Rapids Matbackers will also contribute \$8,943.84, and the District will contribute \$9,000 through the 2024-25 WRAMS athletic Community Service Fund 80 budget.
- BS-6 Approval of the proposed Wisconsin School Nutrition Purchasing Cooperative 66.0301 Agreement for the 2024-25 school year for \$300.00.
- BS-7 Approval of the purchase of 53 Epson Powerlite L260F projectors from Bluum of Minnesota at a total cost of \$55,120.00 to be funded from the 2024-25 District Technology Referendum budget.
- BS-8 Approval of the purchase of 185 - 11” Touchscreen Chromebooks from PDS at a total cost of \$50,042.00 to be funded from the 2023-24 Common School Fund budget and the Technology Referendum budget.
- BS-9 Approval of the purchase of up to 100 BenQ IFPs and up to 100 BalanceBox mounting kits not to exceed a total of \$400,000.00 from BG Innovations to be funded from the Technology Referendum budget.
- BS-10 Approval of the purchase of a used telehandler. The cost of the telehandler will not exceed \$35,000.00 and will be paid from the 2023-24 or 2024-25 Building Trades Home budget and Technical Education budgets.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to approve consent agenda items BS 1-10. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz requested an explanation around how Fund 46 functions in conjunction with the 10-Year Facility Plan, which Mr. Broeren provided.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made
- A donation of used Cat 40 equipment by Marten Machining
- A donation by Altmann Construction for materials and the construction necessary to build a GAGA pit at Woodside Elementary
- A donation of fly fishing equipment by Fly Fishing Essentials

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the May 6, 2024 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Personnel Services Committee – May 6, 2024. Report given by Troy Bier.

Mr. Bier reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Personnel Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- PS-1 Approval of the professional staff appointments of Hailey Augustine (World Language Teacher – WRAMS), Mikayla Obsuszt (Teacher Intern-Business – Lincoln), Sarah Lee (Math Teacher – WRAMS), Sohrab Akhavein (Cross Categorical Teacher – Lincoln), Erika Dingus (Cross Categorical Teacher – Mead), Paige Minton (Social Worker – District), Alice Painter (Cross Categorical Teacher – WRAMS), Michaela Blomberg (School Counselor – THINK/Central Oaks), and Cheri Cetnarowski (Math Teacher – WRAMS).

- PS-2 Approval of the non-represented professional staff appointment of SanJuanita Rodriguez (School Psychologist - District).
- PS-3 Approval of the non-represented support staff appointment of Jordan Deadwyler (IT Support Specialist – District).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff appointments of Kathryn Campbell (Education & Career Planning Coordinator – RCHS), Tami Natywa (Cashier – Grove), Tami Natywa (Kitchen Helper, FFVP – Grove), Julie Kuhn (Registrar – WRAMS).
- PS-5 Approval of the professional staff resignations of Becky Dean (Kindergarten Teacher - Grove), Sierra Frank (Kindergarten Teacher – Grant), Anthony Fannin (Teacher/Virtual Coordinator – Lincoln), Olivia Bachman (School Counselor – THINK/Central Oaks), Brittany Handrich (Kindergarten Teacher – Howe), Tony Xiong (Phy Ed Teacher – Grove), Samantha Powers (Cross Categorical Teacher – Lincoln), Kirsten Kissner (Grade 3 Teacher – Woodside), Samantha Mellberg (Grade 2 Teacher – Grove), Nelson Bricco (Grade 4 Teacher – Woodside), Scott Reaves (Social Studies Teacher – Lincoln), Joely Tracy (Early Childhood Teacher – Pitsch), and David Fiala (Teacher – Woodside).
- PS-6 Approval of the non-represented professional staff resignation of Destiny Clark (School Psychologist – District).
- PS-7 Approval of the support staff resignations of Sheila Lynn (Registrar – WRAMS), Dakota Curry (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Lois Schiesser (Special Ed Aide – Woodside), Kayleena Schauff (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Trina McDonald (Cashier, Kitchen Helper – Grove), Hannah Nelson (ELL Aide – WRAMS), Tina Russell (Security Aide – Lincoln), and Rachel Steinmetz (Noon Duty Aide – Woodside).
- PS-8 Approval of the support staff retirements of Tamara Twait (Library Aide – Grant), Crystal Giese (Manager Satellite Kitchen – Washington), Marilyn Nelson (Manager Satellite Kitchen – Grove), and Camille Dusterdeck (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS).
- PS-9 Approval of the Open Enrollment applications under the Open Enrollment Law, pending a review of discipline records and special services needs.
- PS-10 Approval of the proposed changes regarding the Professional Development section found under “Professional Growth” of the Professional Staff Handbook.
- PS-11 Approval of continuing the social worker administrative assistant position contingent upon program necessity and availability of funding. For the 2024-25 school year, funding will be sourced from the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Innovations Grant and Title I Reservation for Homeless Students.
- PS-12 Approval of a \$1.00 increase for the following summer school and student worker positions effective June 1, 2024: Summer Swim Coordinator, Summer Swim/Community Locker Room Attendant, Summer Swim Lifeguard, Summer Swim Instructor/Community Swim Instructor, Lifeguard/Community Lifeguard, Head Guard/Community Head Guard, Summer B & G Cleaner, Summer B & G Helper, Summer School Aide, Summer School Teacher, Summer Tennis/Gymnastics, Technology Helper-Summer, Chromebook Repair Tech (YA), Student Webmaster (YA), PAC Technician (YA), PAC Technician, B & G (YA), and Copy Assistant (Work Experience).

**Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Julie Timm to approve consent agenda items PS 1-12. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the regular May 6, 2024 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Mr. Krings requested information around the possibility of offering “share tables” during student lunch hours in District buildings where students could drop off unopened lunch items for other students to pick up as a way to encourage consumption of nutritious foods and reduce waste. Mr. Broeren will check into this and provide an update to the Board.

#### Legislative Agenda

Mr. Bier shared the following legislative updates:

- The Wisconsin Policy Forum issued a report about school referenda passage rates, noting that voters across Wisconsin approved 62 of the 103 school district referenda placed on primary and general election ballots in the spring. The 60.2% approval rate was the lowest in a midterm or presidential election year since 2010. The full report is available on the Wisconsin Policy Forum website.
- The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) recently proposed changes to the school start date rule that governs the issuance of start date waivers. The proposed rule provides more flexibility for school boards when seeking to adjust their school calendars to better meet the academic and local needs of their respective district. Surprisingly, Governor Evers has not approved the final rule text, which means the rule will not be able to move to the legislative review step. The last general business day for the 2023-24 legislative session was April 11, 2024 which means the legislature would not be able to review the rule until the 2025-26 legislative session which convenes in January.
- The Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce has filed a lawsuit with the Supreme Court seeking to overturn Governor Evers' use of the partial veto to annually raise school revenue limits by \$325 per pupil until 2425.
- The DPI has released seclusion and restraint data from the 2022-23 school year and overall there was a decrease in incidents of both seclusion and restraint, while students with IEPs continue to make up the vast majority of incidents. Statewide, schools reported 5,396 instances of seclusion in 2022-23 and 6,366 instances where physical restraint was used – a decrease of 8.7% and 8% from the 2021-22 school year, respectively.
- Despite ongoing lawsuits around 2023 Wisconsin Act 100, the law that creates a funding structure for new early literacy initiatives created by 2023 Wisconsin Act 20, the DPI has informed school districts that the requirements outlined in Act 20 are not impacted and implementation of the Act 20 law for the 2024-25 school year remains unchanged.
- Mr. Bier mentioned that it will be important to monitor names of candidates coming forward in the coming weeks who are running for public office positions and be mindful of their position and advocacy around public education when signing election nomination papers.

### Bills

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to note April, 2024 receipts in the amount of \$2,710,388.70 and approve April, 2024 disbursements in the amount of \$3,528,873.10. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

### New Business

#### Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

Brian Oswald, Director of Human Resources, presented the following appointment and resignation requests:

#### Professional Staff Appointments

Zachary Tolle	Location:	Lincoln High School
	Position:	Teacher – Social Studies (1.0 FTE)
	Education:	Bachelor's – UW Stevens Point – December, 2023
	Major/Minor:	History and Social Studies Education
	Salary:	\$45,500.00

Brady Tikalsky	Location:	Grove Elementary
	Position:	Teacher – Physical Education (1.0 FTE)
	Education:	Bachelor's – UW Stevens Point – May 2021
	Major/Minor:	Physical Education/Health
	Salary:	\$48,500.00

#### Professional Staff Resignation

Lori Kurszewski	Location:	Pitsch Early Learning Center
	Position:	Teacher – Early Childhood (1.0 FTE)
	Effective Date:	June 5, 2024
	Date of Hire:	August 24, 2023

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve of the professional staff appointments of Zachary Tolle and Brady Tikalsky, and the professional staff resignation of Lori Kurszewski. Motion carried unanimously.**

Update on Development of 2024-25 District Budget

Aaron Nelson, Director of Business Services, provided an update on the development of the 2024-25 District budget. He is projecting a 2023-24 year-end budget surplus of approximately \$1,000,000 as a result of underspent building and department budgets. Fund balance is anticipated to increase to slightly over \$18,000,000 with the actual amount to be determined following the District audit this summer. Revenue and expense estimates for 2024-25 were provided as follows:

**Revenue – Year Over Year Changes**

Description	Amount
Revenue Cap Authority Increase of \$325	\$1,529,125
Final ESSER Revenue with No Offsetting Expense	\$450,000
Reduction in Interest Revenue	(\$250,000)
<b>Estimated Revenue Increase</b>	<b>\$1,729,125</b>

**Expense – Year Over Year Changes**

Description	Amount
ESSER Fund for Salary and Benefit Costs – 26.5 Staff	\$1,985,903
<i>Estimated</i> Salary, WRS, and FICA Increase	\$1,538,457
<i>Estimated</i> Health Insurance	\$417,302
Known Staff Additions – 1 Staff – Total Package	\$81,000
Known Staff Reductions – 9 Staff – Total Package	(\$952,028)
Property Insurance Increase	\$50,000
Additional Special Education Transportation Cost	\$30,000
<b>Estimated Expense Increase</b>	<b>\$3,150,634</b>
<b>Variance (Budget Deficit)*</b>	<b>(\$1,421,509)</b>

\*The estimated budget deficit presented on March 11, 2024 was (\$1,366,419).

Mr. Nelson explained that the District’s spending plan for 2024-25 continues to be adjusted based upon data as it is received. Building and department budgets will be frozen at 2023-24 amounts and a position reductions will occur through attrition. Grant dollars will be leveraged where possible. In the short term, some drawdown of fund balance may need to occur to cover the shortfall.

The 2024-25 budget does include the \$2,000,000 annual nonrecurring operational referendum which is entering year four out of five as it is set to conclude following the 2025-26 fiscal year. Expense reductions will need to take place beyond the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The Board raised questions around whether the nine known staff reductions are positions related to ESSER revenue. Superintendent Broeren clarified that position reductions occur through a process of determining which positions need to be filled after they are vacated, and considering all available licensed staff members who are certified to teach in these areas. He mentioned that conducting mass layoffs to balance a budget is not advisable because of the current competitive labor market. If the District found itself in a circumstance where they needed to fill a position in which a layoff occurred, it would likely be difficult to recall laid off staff members with the current abundance of job opportunities. A staged down approach from the overstaffing that was intentionally put into place using ESSER funding is the best course of action in order to retain as many staff members as possible and not cause a mass exodus of people before the staff to student ratio becomes more in line with the current pupil count.

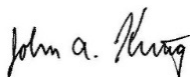
However, if the State does not properly fund public education into the future, drastic measures may be necessary to balance the budget beyond 2024-25. The upcoming biennial State budget for 2025-2027 will be a critical factor impacting the future of local public school district budgets. Mr. Broeren explained how the decrease in student enrollment does impact staffing decisions and it involves a three-year rolling average calculation for State aid revenue purposes. He cautioned against utilizing measures such as mass layoffs, benefits devaluation, or not providing wage increases as this could backfire on the District. While referendums have been helpful for districts to maintain programming, this is not a sustainable way to operate and it is concerning to know that there is starting to be a downturn to referendum passage rates.

A budget hearing to adopt the 2024-25 budget is scheduled to occur on June 24, 2024.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

Mr. Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Julie Timm – Clerk