



**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

July 8, 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, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Brian Oswald, Ronald Rasmussen, Jennifer Wilhorn

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

None.

School Showcase – Lincoln High School

Valerie DeVries-Polman, Family/Consumer Sciences Teacher at Lincoln High School (LHS) and students Emma Wirth, Ariel Webster, Ntsaab Khang, Summer Khang, and Maggie Kozlowski presented on their experiences involving the Educators Rising and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) groups at LHS. Eight Educators Rising students presented projects at the local and State level competitions in the spring, and four FCCLA members presented at local, Regional, and State FCCLA conferences. All twelve of these students advanced to the National Leadership conference. Each student presented information about the positive experiences they have had through through the career and technical student organizations they are involved in. Ms. Devries-Polman provided final details about how well the students represented LHS and the District, and presented final student competition outcomes. The Board thanked everyone involved for their very informative presentation.

Special Recognition

President Krings presented special recognition to District retiring staff members Deanna Willems, Timothy Bean, and Janet Alekna.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to approve special closed session Board meeting minutes of May 7, 2024 (two of them for this date), May 14, 2024, May 29, 2024, and June 4, 2024; special open session Board meeting minutes of June 5, 2024; regular Board meeting minutes of June 10, 2024; special open and closed session Board meeting minutes of June 10, 2024; special Board meeting minutes of June 24, 2024; and special open and closed session Board meeting minutes of July 1, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – July 1, 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 the 2024-25 Pupil Academic Standards as presented.
- ES-2 Approval of the proposed changes to the 2024-25 school year calendar as presented.
- ES-3 Approval of the purchase of the Connecting Math Concepts program as a special education supplemental intervention program for grades kindergarten through 5th grade for a total cost of \$60,851.18 to be paid from the Special Education budget and the Curriculum Referendum budget and to be implemented beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve consent agenda items ES 1-3. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz provided updates and reports on:

- The Committee was updated on a plan to utilize Crisis Prevention Institute’s (CPI) “Reframing Behaviors” training program platform at every school during the 2024-25 school year. The platform was designed to teach actionable skills that can be immediately practiced. Four elements of reframing behavior were defined: 1) Reframe Your Perspective, 2) Reframe Your Awareness, 3) Reframe Your Actions, and 4) Reframe Your Relationships. Mr. Hepp explained that the District has been identified as having significant racial disproportionality in special education identification and discipline. The areas identified include: 1) Hispanic students identified with Specific Learning Disabilities; and 2) Discrepant in Discipline for Multi-Race students with disabilities being suspended and expelled. As a result, it is required to set aside 15% of IDEA formula funds to pay for activities that will address root causes of the disproportionality. This set-aside is called “Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services” (CCEIS). The cost of the Reframing Behaviors program is \$3,000 per school individually, or \$2,000 per school if purchased district-wide. WRPS is eligible to receive one free school since Mr. Hepp served on the customer panel during the development of the program. Total cost of implementing the program at all 12 WRPS schools will be \$22,000 which would be paid using CCEIS funds.

Committee members questioned how the District plans to identify whether or not the program is working as intended. Mr. Hepp explained that if implemented well, the District should experience less removals from the classroom to the office, reduced suspensions/expulsions or other disciplinary measures.

- Ms. Kelly Bluell, WRPS Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator, provided an update regarding opportunities provided to District students through the GATES program during the 2023-24 school year. Numerous student success stories were shared around results from the Noetic Math Contest held, and Math 24 programming. Local vendors and some individuals have been generous in providing donations toward the Math 24 program. Ms. Bluell shared information about the DASH Robot implementation which has students across the district very excited to learn; there are plans being made to expand the program. New Gifted and Talented enrichment options include a collaborative volunteer program between elementary buildings and the high school to have older students mentoring younger students; and enrichment involving these specific programs: Invention Projects, Jacob’s Ladder, and Worldly Wise 3000. Ms. Bluell has submitted a DPI Invention Projects grant, a Power Engineers Dash Mat grant, and a Women’s United Jacob’s Ladder grant to continue support and expansion of GATES programming.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the July 1, 2024 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – July 1, 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 purchasing 13 Juniper EX4100 Switches and 5 years of support for Howe Elementary and THINK Academy from Bytespeed, totaling \$57,200.00, to be funded from the 2024-25 District Technology Referendum Budget.
- BS-2 Approval of the annual insurance premium payment of \$427,683.00 for the 2024-25 school year, to be funded with the District’s insurance budgets.
- BS-3 Approval of the purchase of two minivans and one transit van. The costs of the three vehicles will not exceed \$100,000.00 and will be paid from the 2024-25 transportation budget.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items BS 1-3. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made was reviewed.
- The donation of a reflecting telescope estimated to be worth \$500.00 by retired science teacher Joe Riederer.
- The donation of a refracting telescope estimated to be worth \$3,000.00 by community member Nancy Oschin.
- A donation of \$5,000.00 by the Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA) for playground equipment at Grant Elementary was received.
- A clay bid quote for \$3,320.00 was reviewed.

- Items added to the Lincoln High School Fieldhouse Floor Refinishing quote with Stalker Flooring. The added items include training ladders, training dots, track accelerating zones, 13' free-through lines on the side courts, and two WIAA logos. The additional cost of these items will be \$10,800 for a total cost of \$76,100. The District's 10-year plan indicates \$80,000 for this project.
- An invoice held for the playground project in the amount of \$111,082.90 which was to be paid out of the 2023-24 fiscal year Fund 10; however, the project isn't anticipated to be completed by June 30, 2024 as originally planned. As a result, the administration intends to include the cost amount in the year-end Fund 46 transfer and pay the final invoice out of Fund 46 once it is completed during the summer.
- The annual auditor engagement letter was reviewed.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the July 1, 2024 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – July 1, 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 Matthew Gates (Teacher – Woodside) and Alyssa Haas (Teacher – Howe).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Chani Pulchinski (Relief Custodian – District), Jennifer Schudy (Faculty Clerk – Lincoln), Trent Gastonguay (Custodian – Lincoln), Drew Glinski (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Kristin Hager (Administrative Assistant – Grove), Aferdita Mehmedi-Muslija (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Karleen Rosenthal (Supervisory Study Hall Aide – Lincoln), Tricia Grimm (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Shelly Anderson (Attendance Clerk – Lincoln), Miranda Thompson (Special Ed Aide – Washington), Ashley Brandl (Special Ed Aide – Washington), and Ashley Agen (Library Aide – Grant).
- PS-3 Approval of the Youth Apprenticeship/work experience support staff appointments of Jordyn Harriman (Youth Apprenticeship – PAC) and Leah Balthazor (Youth Apprenticeship – PAC).
- PS-4 Approval of the non-represented support staff appointment of Cale Benitz (Athletic Department Assistant/Aquatics Director – Lincoln).
- PS-5 Approval of the professional staff resignations of Samantha Messner (Teacher – Pitsch), Genesis Cratsenberg (Teacher – Howe), Lisa Derfus (Teacher – Washington), and Chang Thao (Teacher – Grove).
- PS-6 Approval of the support staff resignations of Bonnie Olson (Kitchen Helper – Woodside) and Trina Wolosek (Instructional 4K Aide – Central Oaks).
- PS-7 Approval of Board Policy 345.5 – Graduation Requirements for second reading.
- PS-8 Approval of a \$500.00 stipend for each Playworks Recess Manager to be paid out of the Stronger Connections Grant.
- PS-9 Approval of a \$500.00 stipend for each Reframing Behavior Facilitator paid out of CCEIS Funds.
- PS-10 Approval of a 4.12 percent increase to the following positions effective July 1, 2024: Psychologists, Athletic Director, Assistant Athletic Director, Food Production Coordinator, Food Services, School Nurses, Computer Technicians, PAC Director, PAC Assistant Coordinator, Network Manager, Systems Manager, Instructional Software Support, Confidential Secretaries, Van Drivers, Custodial and Maintenance, AV Coordinator, and Office/Clerical and Aide Support Staff.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Julie Timm to approve consent agenda items PS 1-10. 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 July 1, 2024 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Mr. Bier shared the following legislative updates:

- A primary election is scheduled for August 13, 2024 and Mr. Bier encouraged voters to do their homework to become educated and vote.
- In late June, 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) announced that NCS Pearson has been selected to supply the statewide reading readiness screener under the requirements of 2023 Wisconsin Act 20. The DPI will need to negotiate a final contract before July 15, 2024 with NCS Pearson that will include details about assessment administration, accommodations and accessibility options, trainings for teachers and administrators, and testing windows.
- The DPI released its estimate of the equalization aid public school districts will receive in the 2024-25 school year. Equalization is the largest form of state aid that public schools in Wisconsin receive and it is designed with two goals in mind: to reduce reliance upon local property taxes and to guarantee that a basic educational opportunity is available to all pupils regardless of the local fiscal capacity of their respective school district. Aid data is expected to be impacted by the ongoing financial data reporting issues at Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), and the July estimate may vary to a greater degree than normal from the final October data.

Bills

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to note June, 2024 receipts in the amount of \$5,234,531.68 and approve June, 2024 disbursements in the amount of \$6,181,393.14. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

None.

Hiring of an Additional Assistant Director of Pupil Services Administrator

Superintendent Ronald Rasmussen presented a proposal to create an additional Pupil Services administrative position dedicated to coordinating, implementing, and enhancing educational programs and initiatives within the District. The role will focus primarily on the initiatives outlined in the Stronger Connections Grant, the School-Based Mental Health Grant, and the Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) set-aside funds. The position would be funded by these grants and continue as long as funding is available and progress is being achieved.

Goals and actions that would fall under the Pupil Services administrator were reviewed. Creating the position is integral to advancing the educational objectives outlined in the grants and addressing systemic challenges within WRPS. Through strategic coordination and implementation of programs, this position will play a vital role in fostering a supportive and equitable learning environment for all students. Moving from a coordinator to an administrative position will allow this position to oversee multiple areas, such as curriculum development, budgeting, personnel management, and policy implementation. It will ensure cohesive operations across the entire district. The individual will be responsible for implementation, decision-making, accountability, leadership, and interagency collaboration.

Steve Hepp, Director of Pupil Services, explained how the three grant areas being considered to support the position have similarities in what they are attempting to accomplish. Developing this position which offers a higher level of accountability and has a defined focus, will help the District move forward in addressing the District's student disproportionality identification, student behavior and mental health issues, and equity concerns.

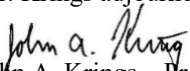
Mr. Rasmussen presented contract details and a recommended wage rate for the position. The Board questioned whether the requirement for a #80 Director of Special Education administrator license might reduce the applicant pool, and Mr. Rasmussen stated that the posting will indicate that the District is willing to hire an individual willing to work toward certification.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to approve of creating a second Assistant Director of Pupil Services with a 2-year, 220-day contract beginning with the 2024-25 school year at a cost of \$123,582 to be paid from the Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services, School-Based Mental Health Grant, and Stronger Connections Grant. This position will be evaluated for continuation after two years based on effectiveness and available grant funds. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

Mr. Krings adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.


John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Julie Timm – Clerk