



**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

September 9, 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

BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED: Julie Timm

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Roxanne Filtz, Tracy Ginter, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Brian Oswald, Ronald Rasmussen, Rodrick Watson

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

None.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Delaine Morrison shared updates on the following:

- Over 300 freshmen were welcomed to Lincoln High School on August 22, 2024 for orientation
- Raider discount cards are now being sold in the community to support the local DECA chapter
- Fall sports have begun which includes football, golf, soccer, tennis, volleyball, and cross country
- The first “Late Start Monday” for WRPS began on September 9, 2024
- Upcoming events in sports will continue; the National Honor Society induction ceremony is scheduled, and a Lincoln High School activities fair will feature numerous opportunities for students to become involved
- Homecoming preparations are well underway for the early October events being planned

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Elizabeth St.Myers to approve regular Board meeting minutes of August 12, 2024; and special open and closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of August 26, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – September 3, 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 continuing the implementation of FAST at Pitsch Early Learning Center, Washington Elementary, Grove Elementary, and Howe Elementary for the 2024-25 school year and beyond, contingent upon ongoing grant funding.
- ES-2 Approval of funding up to eight FASTWORKS events per building each year at Pitsch Early Learning Center, Washington Elementary, Grove Elementary, and Howe Elementary at a cost of \$150.00 per night which includes a staff hourly rate of \$25.00 and other associated expenses, to be funded by the Stronger Connections and the Mental Health Grant at an estimated cost if all buildings implement FASTWORKS of \$4,800.00; funding for the 2024-25 year and beyond will continue, contingent upon the availability of grant funds for any building running a FAST Cycle.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda items ES 1-2. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz provided updates and reports on:

- The Committee was provided an update on Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) entitlement grants that states receive through the federal government. Grant allocations for the District for 2024-25 are: \$1,283,366.00 for Title I, \$175,918.00 for Title II, \$14,297.00 for Title III, and \$98,004.00 for Title IV. These amounts do not include carryover dollars from unspent 2023-24 Title funding, which is still being determined. The overall total in ESSA grant funds for 2024-15 is \$1,571,585.00 which is a decrease of \$85,018.00 from the previous year. Title schools include Grove, Howe, Mead, and River Cities.
- Ms. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, provided a final summary report on the use of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III funds by the District. A total of \$7,082,465.00 was received to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and all grant funds have been expended by the required September 2024 deadline. The District has been transparent with its utilization of the funds, and the webpage area designated for ESSER III reporting will remain active throughout the end of the 2024-25 school year for reference.
- Ms. Filtz explained that as part of its latest acquisition, the District elementary physical education program included the purchase of LU projectors to enhance student engagement in Phy Ed and to offer a stronger collaboration between academics and Phy Ed instruction. It was understood at the time that there would be an ongoing cost for program software renewal in future years. At the end of August, Physical Education Curriculum Coordinator Justin Weinhold learned that WRPS could renew its LU program software for 5 years with a \$1,900.00 per school discount if it was done before September 1, 2024. As a result, the administration secured this purchase and renewed the LU software in time to take advantage of the special pricing. A total amount of \$36,000.00 for the 5-year renewal has been paid through the Curriculum and Technology Referendum budget.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the September 3, 2024 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – September 3, 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 a contribution of \$3,000.00 to the United Way to purchase school supplies for students that live within the WRPS attendance area for the 2024-25 school year to be funded with the District's community service/Fund 80 budget.

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

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made was reviewed.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the September 3, 2024 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – September 3, 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 Jeremy Akey (Teacher – Lincoln/WRAMS), Donald Botcher (Teacher – Lincoln), and Brittany Handrich (Teacher – Howe).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Jennifer Skalecki (Kitchen Helper – Lincoln), Faith Peaslee (Second Cook – Howe), Samantha Conway (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Dixie Torke (Supervisory/Health Aide – WRAMS), Katrina Jabbi (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Chelsea Klutterman (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Pang Foua Khang (ELL Aide – WRAMS), Rachel Charette (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Malinda De La Cruz (Supervisory Aide – WRAMS), Catherine Weis (Instructional Aide – WRAMS), Candace Dunn (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Jennifer Churchill, (Special Ed Aide – Grove), Lynette Braun – Special Ed/Noon Duty Aide – Grove), Cheryl Clark (Noon Duty Aide – Grant), Ebony Coleman (Noon Duty Aide – Mead),

Jessica Honeycutt (Noon Duty Aide – Mead), Ashley Agen (Instructional 4K Aide – Grant), Emily Jinsky (Kitchen Helper/Breakfast Cashier – Woodside), Haley Casper (Instructional/Noon Duty Aide – THINK), Rachel Olari (Library Aide – Grant), Debra Jepson (Special Ed Aide – Howe), Brenda Greene (Administrative Assistant to Social Workers/Families in Transition Coordinator – District), and Bonnie Edholm (Noon Duty Aide – Woodside).

- PS-3 Approval of the professional staff resignations of Kristin Scheunemann (Teacher – District) and Robyn Lochner (Teacher – WRAMS).
- PS-4 Approval of the professional staff resignation of Jeremy Radtke pending receipt of liquidated damages and payment of salary already paid for the 2024-25 school year (Teacher – Lincoln).
- PS-5 Approval of the support staff resignations of Stacy Anderson (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Savannah Smith (Special Ed Aide – Howe), Matthias Haschke (Title VI Coordinator/Native American Liaison – District), Lisa Lee (Instructional 4K Aide – Grant), Sonya Frost (Instructional Aide – River Cities), and Johnathon Jennings (Special Ed Aide – Grove).
- PS-6 Approval of Board Policy 345.13 – Grades High School Courses for second reading.
- PS-7 Approval of Board Policy 345.13 Exhibit 1 – Grade Change Appeal Form for second reading.
- PS-8 Approval of Board Policy 610 – Fiscal Management Goals for second reading.
- PS-9 Approval of Board Policy 620 – Annual Operating Budget for second reading.
- PS-10 Approval of Board Policy 620 Rule – Budget Planning Procedures for second reading.
- PS-11 Approval of Board Policy 621 – Budget Implementation for second reading.
- PS-12 Approval of Board Policy 621.1 – Budget Modifications for second reading.
- PS-13 Approval of a \$1,500 stipend for the Elementary Library Media Specialist for the 2024-2025 school year.
- PS-14 Approval of a \$1,500 stipend to coordinate the Common School Fund budget for the 2024-2025 school year.
- PS-15 Approval of the change of the District’s Short Term Disability and Long Term Disability carrier to ~~National Insurance Services (NIS)~~ Madison National Life.

Superintendent Rasmussen stated that a correction to PS-15 is needed to change the carrier name from National Insurance Services to Madison National Life.

Troy Bier requested that consent agenda Item PS-4 be held out with no action taken as this item will be discussed and possibly acted upon during a special meeting scheduled to immediately follow the regular Board meeting.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve consent agenda items PS 1-3 and 5-15 with the noted correction to PS-15. 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 September 3, 2024 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Mr. Bier shared the following legislative updates:

- The Governor’s Task Force on Broadband Access has released its fourth annual report which provides an update on achievements to expand access, adoption, and affordability of high-speed internet across Wisconsin.
- The Joint Legislative Audit Committee voted on August 30, 2024 to order an audit to analyze the Department of Public Instruction’s (DPI) monitoring of school district finances following financial reporting issues at Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). After rigorous debate, the committee expanded the scope of the audit to include additional schools that report financial data to the DPI, including choice and charter schools meeting certain reporting thresholds.

- There will be a total of 137 local school district referendums on the upcoming November ballot in 120 districts. Fifty-nine will ask for temporary (non-recurring) authority to increase district revenue limits, while 21 will ask for permanent (recurring) authority to increase district revenue limits. Also, 57 borrowing referendums will be on the ballot to ask voters for approval to issue bonds for major construction, remodeling, or maintenance projects for school facilities. More details about upcoming referendums, as well as historical passage rates, can be found on the Wisconsin Association of Schools Board’s website.

Bills

(Note: Due to Elizabeth St.Myers serving on the Boys & Girls Club Board of Directors, she requested to have Check #111184 held out for a separate vote in order to abstain.)

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to note August, 2024 receipts in the amount of \$7,798,304.95 and approve August, 2024 disbursements, with the exception of Check #111184, in a total amount of \$3,964,886.62. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the disbursement of Check #111184 from in an amount of \$36,982.98 to Boys & Girls Club. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0. Elizabeth St.Myers abstained.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

Brian Oswall, Director of Human Resources, presented the following professional staff appointments:

Carmen Holewinski	Location:	Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School
	Position:	Teacher – Math (1.0 FTE)
	Education:	Master’s – University of Phoenix, AZ – February, 2005 Master’s – Gheorghe Asachi University, Romania – July, 1997 Bachelor’s – Gheorghe Asachi University, Romania – July, 1996
	Major/Minor:	International Business, Electrical Engineering
	Salary:	\$48,053 – 166 days (\$55,000 total salary)
Brian McCusker	Location:	Howe Elementary
	Position:	Teacher – Counselor (1.0 FTE)
	Education:	Master’s – University of LaVerne, CA – January, 2024 Bachelor’s – Grand Valley State University, MI – June, 2015
	Major/Minor:	Counselor Education / Theater Arts
	Salary:	\$45,450 – 171 days (\$50,500 total salary)

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Elizabeth St.Myers to approve of the professional staff appointments of Carmen Holewinski and Brian McCusker as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Presence Contract for Speech and Language Pathology Support

Steve Hepp, Director of Pupil Services, presented a contract entered into with Presence, a leading provider of virtual special education services. Due to the current labor shortage and an immediate need to provide services to students with IEPs or Service Plans, the contract was agreed to as a temporary solution to ensure continuity of support for students for 2024-25. The administration will assess the effectiveness of the services offered through Presence, and intends to repost the Speech and Language Pathologist position in spring with hopes to secure a qualified candidate. Cost details to purchase the services were shared, along with funding sources that will be used to cover the expense.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve of the 2024-25 contract with Presence to provide speech and language services at a cost of \$64,801.00 for parochial school students receiving speech services through Service Plans, and \$16,055.75 to provide speech and language services to WRPS students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), to be funded by District Flow-Through dollars. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

License Agreement with Town of Grand Rapids

Superintendent Ronald Rasmussen shared that the District has been approached by the Town of Grand Rapids with a “Pedestrian Crossing and Bike Trail Extension License Agreement” for both parties to enter into as a way to increase the connectedness of pedestrian crossing points to existing bike trail routes and improve pedestrian safety in the area of County Highway W and 48th Street South. The Town of Grand Rapids would develop a route extension at no cost to the District which would cross the property of River Cities High School on the southeast side, near the roundabout traffic circle. In return, the District would grant a “Trail Extension License” to the Town of Grand Rapids as outlined in the Agreement, with the Town paying \$1.00 to the District for this License. The Town would maintain, inspect, repair, or replace the Trail as necessary. The Agreement would remain in effect for fifty (50) years and then automatically renews

for additional twenty (20) year periods. It can be revoked or terminated by the District at any time. The District retains possession and control of the Licensed area, including access to it at all times. The Board discussed the agreement.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the Pedestrian Crossing and Bike Trail Extension License Agreement with the Town of Grand Rapids effective September 9, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Neola Policy Services Contract

Mr. Rasmussen explained that following the implementation of the Board's Title IX policy which was generated with assistance from Neola policy services, and in light of concerns raised in recent months about outdated Board policies, the administration has been reviewing potential Board policy service options with Neola. Currently, 340 out of 421 school districts in Wisconsin are utilizing Neola to streamline policy development processes. Using Neola can help prioritize Board and administrative time which can result in time and cost savings, provide a proactive and systematic process for policy review, enable school districts to stay current and in compliance with the large volume of State and Federal law and rule changes that have been enacted in recent years, and policy recommendations are vetted through Wisconsin legal firms. All area Wisconsin Valley Conference school districts are currently utilizing Neola services, except Wisconsin Rapids.

Should the Board approve of contracting with Neola, once all WRPS policies have been updated a continual process for annual review will ensue in order to remain current. Policies would continue to come before the Board for review and final approval; however, they would be done in one reading as opposed to the current first and second reading approval process. While the Neola policy language is developed for use across hundreds of school districts, school boards still have the opportunity to infuse local policy language where they feel it is needed.

All District policies would be moved to the BoardDocs electronic hosting platform, which is a digital tool to be utilized between the District and Neola to continually draft, prepare, present, approve and process any policy changes. BoardDocs will also archive all policy changes.

The cost for the first two years of the contract, which includes policy drafting and digital publishing, is \$31,045.00; included in this amount is a \$750.00 credit for Neola policy services which were utilized recently to draft the District's comprehensive Title IX policy. Once the initial drafting and policy development work is finished over an estimated two-year period, in the third year and beyond, an annual service fee of approximately \$3,545.00 will be assessed for continued updates and digital publishing to keep everything current.

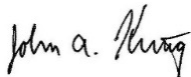
Board members had an opportunity to ask questions, expressing support for having updated policies that have been vetted by attorneys. They also want to maintain local control over final policy language that gets adopted to ensure that the language best fits the needs of WRPS, which Mr. Rasmussen confirmed is possible while using Neola.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the proposed contract with Neola for Board policy services at a total cost of \$31,045.00 covering years one and two, and an estimated annual service fee of \$3,545.00 thereafter, to be paid from a Board contracted services account. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

Mr. Krings adjourned the meeting at 6:53 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Julie Timm – Clerk