



**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

October 14, 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, Julie Timm

BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED: Elizabeth St.Myers

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Roxanne Filtz, Melanie Hanneman, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Brian Oswald,
Ronald Rasmussen, Ashley Tessmer

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

None.

Special Recognition

President Krings and Superintendent Rasmussen presented the 2024 Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) Business Honor Roll award to Vice President Greg Hartjes from E-Con Electric, thanking him and his company for their significant contributions and strong support for District students and programming.

School/Department Showcase

Ed Allison, Director of Buildings & Grounds, and Melanie Hanneman, Director of Food Services, presented information about various programs and initiatives being undertaken within their respective departments. The Board thanked them for the informative updates and for the hidden work that takes place behind the scenes to keep school operations running smoothly.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Delainey Morrison shared updates on the following:

- Spirit Week at Lincoln High School is happening next week
- Girls golf recently performed well at regional and sectional competitions
- Girls tennis became conference champions recently, and multiple girls will be headed to State competition
- Students interested in pursuing a military career took the ASVAB test on October 8th
- Progress 1 ended on October 11th, and LHS Parent Teacher Visitation is coming up on October 14th
- Numerous students will be involved in the upcoming Day of Caring Event to rake leaves on October 26th
- Cross Country sectionals will be occurring on October 26th
- A choir concert is scheduled for October 28th, and an orchestra concert is scheduled for October 29th

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to approve regular Board meeting minutes of September 29, 2024, and special open and closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of September 9, 2024 and September 16, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – October 7, 2024. Report given by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz stated that there are no actionable items from the Educational Services Committee meeting of October 7, 2024, and she provided updates and reports on:

- New course proposals: Advanced Video, Digital and Graphic Arts; and Game Changers: Tracing History through Sports
- Course drops: America’s Voice and America’s Story
- Proposed changes to Science course offerings: Earth Structure & Processes; Meteorology, Oceanography, and Climatology; Physical Geology; Topics in Physical Science; Topics in Life Science; Physics 101; and AP Environmental Science
- Proposed changes to Physical Education offerings: Environmental Lit. in the Outdoors; Outdoor Education; and Winter Outdoor Education
- Proposed Changes to Mental Health and Stress Management course
- Upcoming student travel plans for the Lincoln High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) group to travel to Indianapolis, Indiana from October 22-25, 2024 to attend the FFA National Convention
- Wisconsin Student Assessment results for 2023-24 will be shared at the regular Board meeting on October 14th since the embargo will be lifted by then

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the October 7, 2024 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – October 7, 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 66.03.01 cooperative agreement with the Nekoosa School District for their student attending the Project Search program.
- BS-2 Approval to change the District’s capitalization threshold from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00 effective October 1, 2024, the date of the OMB change.
- BS-3 Approval to purchase a 2024 Cargo Van for \$38,491.00 from Wheelers Chevrolet, to be paid from the 2024-25 Buildings and Grounds Budget.
- BS-4 Approval of the 5-year service agreement renewal with Honeywell for \$310,684.00, to be paid from the Buildings and Grounds Budget.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items BS 1-4. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made
- Annual implementation and maintenance subscription fee of \$535.00 per site for 13 sites, or \$6,955.00 for Critical Response Group digital mapping updates
- District involvement in a natural gas cost reduction program with assistance from Constellation Energy, a gas purchasing consultant

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the October 7, 2024 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – October 7, 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 support staff appointments of Bridget Koeshall-Chariton (Special Ed Aide – Washington), Renee Dewitt (Noon Duty Aide – Washington), Brittney Schroeder (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Kelly Deitz (Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant – District), Jody Gerner (Instructional Aide – River Cities), Kyia Haberkorn (Special Ed Aide – Grove), Mia Tritz (Instructional Aide – Central Oaks), James Alft (Special Education Aide – Lincoln), Samuel Scheidegger (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Brittany Bord (Office/Health Aide – Washington), and Matthias Haschke (Title VI Coordinator/Native American Liaison – WRAMS/LHS).
- PS-2 Approval of the professional staff resignation of Samantha Radtke (Teacher/Counselor – Grant), pending liquidated damages.

- PS-3 Approval of the support staff resignations of Abbi McCarty (Reading Interventionist Aide – Lincoln), Catherine Weis (Instructional Aide – WRAMS), Heather Ruesch (Instructional Aide – Central Oaks), Dan Matthew Almario (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), and Candace Van Lysal (Noon Duty Aide – Grant).
- PS-4 Approval of professional staff retirement of Kimberly Martin (Teacher/SEF – Howe/THINK).
- PS-5 Approval of the non-represented support staff retirement of Lori Stanton (HR Specialist – District).
- PS-6 Approval of hiring an additional full-time special education teacher position to alleviate current caseloads and support incoming students.
- PS-7 Approval of yearly stipends in the amount of \$250 for Pupil Services Team Leaders.
- PS-8 Approval of a one-time stipend to Jean Westover in the amount of \$2,000 for overtime work on the Skyward Qmlativ SIS migration.
- PS-9 Approval of proposed language changes regarding the Benefits section found under “Post-Employment Insurance Benefit” of the Professional Staff Handbook, effective October 15, 2024.

Kathi Stebbins-Hintz requested that consent agenda Item PS-9 be held out so that she could abstain.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda items PS 1-8. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to approve of consent agenda item PS-9. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0. Kathi Stebbins-Hintz abstained.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the October 7, 2024 Personnel Services Committee meeting with one correction to change the labeling of the last item, “PS-7” to be “PS-9.” Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Mr. Benbow requested a usage activity report for events hosted at the Rapids Area Sports Complex.

Legislative Agenda

Mr. Bier shared the following legislative updates:

- November will see the election of half (the even-numbered districts) of the 33 State Senate districts, and all 99 Assembly districts; significant turnover is expected in both chambers next session.
- State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly gave her annual State of Education Address on September 26, 2024, outlining her top policy initiatives and called on the state legislature to invest more into special education and education investment more broadly.
- On September 26, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the opening of the 2024 Clean School Bus (CSB) Rebate Program application period. Under the program, the EPA anticipates awarding up to \$965 million in rebate funding with the potential to modify this figure based on the application pool and other factors.
- The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) hosted White House National Cyber Director Harry Coker, Jr. and dozens of education, public library and cybersecurity leaders across the state during a roundtable on cybersecurity on October 7, 2024. Conversations centered around the importance of being proactive in protecting school district infrastructure from cyber threats.
- On October 8, 2024, the DPI released results for the statewide assessments issued in the spring of last year including the Forward Exam given in Grades 3-8 and 10, the PreACT Secure given in Grades 9 and 10, the ACT with writing in Grade 11, and Dynamic Learning Maps.

Bills

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to note September, 2024 receipts in the amount of \$6,620,066.43 and approve September, 2024 disbursements in the amount of \$4,553,221.17. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

None.

District Employee Health Insurance Plan Renewal

Superintendent Ronald Rasmussen presented information concerning the District’s 2025 health insurance plan renewal and continued contributions to employee Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). The District currently offers two plan options for employees: Signature plan and Freedom plan. The Signature plan currently has 109 on single and 328 on family, and the Freedom plan currently has 48 on single and 130 on family. The overall usage rate for the year is at 116%, and the prior year usage rate was 109%. Initial renewal rates proposed to the District came in at an 11.49% overall plan increase (Signature – 8% and Freedom – 24%). The District budgeted a 5% plan increase for 2024-25. With the high usage rate experienced, going to bid would not be assistive at this time, and moving to higher deductibles or other plan options would yield insignificant percentage reductions. Maintaining multiple plan options for employees would be preferred, but the costs to do so may be prohibitive.

The following information was presented to the Board:

New Renewal Rates	Monthly Premium	Single	Family
Signature – 7% Capped at 9.5% in Year Two	2023-24	\$873.48	\$1,954.35
	2024-25	\$934.62	\$2,091.15
Freedom – 24% No Cap in Year Two	2023-24	\$1,020.99	\$2,284.36
	2024-25	\$1,266.03	\$2,832.65

Recommendation	Monthly Premium	23/24 Employee	24/25 Employee	23/24 WRPS	24/25 WRPS
Signature Maintain 15% Employee, 85% WRPS Cost Sharing	Single	\$131.02	\$140.19	\$742.46	\$794.43
	Family	\$293.15	\$313.67	\$1,661.20	\$1,777.48
	Yearly Premium	23/24 Employee	24/25 Employee	23/24 WRPS	24/25 WRPS
	Single	\$1,572.24	\$1,682.32	\$8,909.52	\$9,533.12
	Family	\$3,517.80	\$3,764.04	\$19,934.40	\$21,329.76
Recommendation	Monthly Premium	23/24 Employee	24/25 Employee	23/24 WRPS	24/25 WRPS
Freedom Move to 30% Employee, 70% WRPS Cost Sharing	Single	\$153.15	\$379.81	\$867.84	\$886.22
	Family	\$342.65	\$849.80	\$1,941.71	\$1,982.85
	Yearly Premium	23/24 Employee	24/25 Employee	23/24 WRPS	24/25 WRPS
	Single	\$1,837.80	\$4,557.72	\$10,414.08	\$10,634.64
	Family	\$4,111.80	\$10,197.60	\$23,300.52	\$23,794.20

An additional recommended change is to have the Health Savings Account (HSA) contributions remain the same at \$3,000 per year for Family, and \$1,500 for Single plans, except have the payment disbursement schedule change to have one-half of the distribution paid on the first payroll in January (\$750-single/\$1,500-family), and the other portion (\$750-single/\$1,500-family) paid on the first payroll in September. No other changes to the plan deductibles or coverages are being recommended at this time.

To go along with the recommendations outlined, the Board has already approved of a change in the Professional Staff Handbook language to stipulate that at retirement, the post-employment retirement benefit will be subject to the least expensive health plan offered.

Mr. Rasmussen stated that in light of the impending budget deficit anticipated to be around \$1 million for 2024-25, and \$2.41 million for 2025-26, reducing expenditures where possible is paramount. Should the Board approve of the administration’s recommendation, he explained how employees would be provided assistance through meetings established with M3, the District’s insurance broker, and human resources personnel.

Board members discussed the recommendation.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve proposed modifications to the District employee health insurance plan as proposed, which includes maintaining Signature Plan benefits as is with employees

paying 15% of premiums and the District paying 85% of premiums; changing the Freedom Plan to have employees paying 30% of premiums and the District paying 70% of premiums; and maintaining the Health Savings Account deposit amount at \$3,000 for a family plan and \$1,500 for a single plan to be deposited in a split amount with 50% deposited in January and 50% deposited in September each calendar year effective January 1, 2025. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote of 5-0. Kathi Stebbins-Hintz abstained.

2024 Friend of Education Award

Mr. Rasmussen recommended that the Bell Family Charitable Foundation receive the Board of Education “2024 Friend of Education” award for their support and contributions toward the transition program at River Cities High School, as well as their significant donation to help upgrade the football field on the Lincoln High School campus.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve of presenting the 2024 Friend of Education Award to the Bell Charitable Family Foundation. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0. Troy Bier abstained.

Process to Update Board Policies Using Neola Policy Services

Mr. Rasmussen explained that as the District moves to revamp Board policies in conjunction with Neola policies, a bit of direction from the Board concerning the process would be helpful. He shared a few example policies with the Board to demonstrate the various unique language options provided by Neola in many policies which can be incorporated as deemed appropriate for the District. Additionally, existing Board policy language can be included where the Board feels it is important to do so. Mr. Rasmussen explained that since the Neola prescribed policies are vetted by Wisconsin attorneys, staying close to the recommended language as much as possible will keep the District current and in alignment with state and federal regulations. If Neola policy language is primarily adopted, the copyright notation at the bottom of the policy will indicate it is a Neola policy; if mostly District language is utilized in a policy, the copyright will be by the District and no warranty or assistance from Neola to defend the policy will be applicable. Should the District use its own language, it may be necessary to have the language vetted by District legal counsel depending upon the policy content and potential liability risk.

Lastly, Mr. Rasmussen stated there are a variety of ways other districts proceed in producing policies for Board review. Some options include having a clean version presented to the Board for approval after the administration has gone through all of the options, or seeing a draft of all options and strikethroughs that were selected by the administration to be discussed prior to the Board approving it. By consensus, the Board indicated they would prefer to see the working drafts containing selected options.

Mr. Rasmussen then requested direction on how the Board would prefer to proceed to review the policies. Current policy stipulates that the Personnel Services Committee is responsible for policy review. After some conversation, the Board indicated they would prefer to have all Board members go through the policies together, and this work will be done at a special meeting following the Educational Services Committee meeting whenever a batch of policies is ready to be reviewed.

Mr. Rasmussen then pointed out a new procedure provided through the Neola policy service process for the Board to consider, and that is for the Board to potentially allow “Technical Corrections.” Technical corrections are those corrections to policy language or construction that do not reflect a policy decision or substantive consideration by the Board, such as correction of a typographical or grammatical error, inclusion or correction of a statutory citation, renumbering of sections, combining of policies, or similar actions. Should any of these technical corrections be made, the Superintendent is obligated to inform the Board of any such changes no later than the next regular Board meeting. The Board signaled their favor in allowing technical corrections in future policies.

The Board will review the first batch of policies, which deal with Board Bylaws, in either November or December once they are ready. The process will be to approve a batch, set them aside, and continue reviewing remaining policy sets before bringing all of the policies through at once for final approval and adoption.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the full Board’s involvement in the process to update Board policies using Neola’s track change features, and other process parameters as discussed. Motion carried unanimously.

2023-24 Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) Results

Ms. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, provided an update to the Board on Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) results for the 2023-24 school year. She explained that the Forward Exam was updated beginning with the 2023-24 test administration to reflect feedback from educators and revisions to the Wisconsin Academic Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. The performance level standard setting process was described; science scale scores have been reported on the same scales since spring, 2019 while social studies scale scores have been reported on the same scales since spring, 2022. The Department of Public Instruction

(DPI) provided a message to districts explaining that due to revisions in ELA and mathematics academic standards, test designs, blueprints, scales, and performance level cut scores for those subject areas, many of the simple methods used to compare current-year student performance to prior years are unavailable. They recommend that data users consider spring 2024 as the first year of a new trend when comparing student performance in the future. Performance level descriptions are now identified as “Advanced,” “Meeting,” “Approaching,” or “Developing.”

Ms. Filtz then reviewed how various reports related to subject summary, category summary, and demographic summary provide key information for educators and leadership teams. The assessment data can be assistive in evaluating the effectiveness of programs, help with school improvement planning and goal setting, establish professional development plans, and align curriculum resources for effective deployment.

In terms of actual results, Ms. Filtz reviewed WRPS results in comparison to State results. In numerous areas of ELA, the District is performing close to State levels. There are some concerns at the 8th grade level that are being reviewed to determine how scores for this cohort of students can be improved upon. Good strides have been made to improve scores in mathematics to bring them closer to State levels, and it appears that the curriculum shift at Grades 3, 4, and 5 to the Numbers Corner and Bridges math programs being used to fidelity is improving academic outcomes. A great deal of professional development with the Eureka program has also occurred this past summer with middle school teachers, which has been beneficial. Ms. Filtz shared comparative data using groups of the same students since trend data is not yet available; the data indicates that gains are being made to bring students closer to State level performance.

Comparisons to surrounding districts were presented, and enrollment numbers for students with disabilities and those economically disadvantaged were reviewed and considered. PreACT and ACT data was also presented; data teams continue to review test data and content, and there is on-going professional development to help improve performance in these areas.

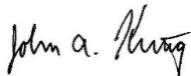
Ms. Filtz expressed confidence in the fact that significant progress is being made to close the learning gap caused by the pandemic, but also acknowledged there continues to be work to do and she has no intentions on settling when there are ways to continue to improve. She stated that she believes the District is moving in the right direction.

Ms. Filtz stated that School Report Cards will be publicly released on November 19th, and she will be bringing this data to the Board in December. Not only do Report Cards weigh in on achievement, but also on growth, which can be very telling in terms of whether student progress is being made.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

Mr. Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Julie Timm – Clerk