



MINUTES

Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee

510 Peach Street · Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 · (715) 424-6701

Mary Rayome, Chairperson
John Benbow, Jr.
Katie Bielski-Medina
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
Sandra Hett
John Krings, President

February 7, 2022

LOCATION: Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School Auditorium
1921 27th Avenue South, Wisc. Rapids, WI

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Katie Bielski-Medina, Troy Bier, Larry Davis, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Mary Rayome

OTHERS PRESENT: Ed Allison, Phillip Bickelhaupt, Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp, Brian Oswald

I. Call to Order

Mary Rayome called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Comment - none

IV. Actionable Items

A. Board Policy 380.1 - Therapy Dogs in Schools and Board Policy 380 - Animals in the School for First Reading

Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, introduced Policy 380.1 – Therapy Dogs in Schools as a new policy for the Committee’s consideration. She explained the benefits of adopting the policy given the increased need for a variety of social and emotional supports in classrooms throughout the District. If approved, Policy 380 – Animals in the School would be revised to make a cross reference to the Therapy Dog policy.

ES-1 Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Troy Bier, to approve Policy 380.1 – Therapy Dogs in Schools and Policy 380 – Animals in the School for first reading. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 2022-2023 District Strategic Plan

Ms. Filtz and Superintendent Broeren presented the 2022-23 District Strategic Plan. The administration provided narratives underneath each objective within the draft plan to detail the progress made and/or reasoning behind changes being recommended. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions about the plan, and specific points of conversation occurred around:

- work being done to meet the needs of students and implement robust programming, particularly over the next two years, to meet student need and increase academic success
- how Information and Technology Literacy Standards (ITLS) are being integrated throughout the curriculum
- the condition of the physical Vesper elementary building which would take a significant investment to upgrade – the building is still usable and some patchwork has occurred with the roof, but there are no plans in the near future to invest the hundreds of thousands of dollars it would take to update the building
- with regard to Objective 3, the administration continues to work with US² on the District's equity initiatives which include evaluating student access to resources. Conversations continue around the District Equity Coordinator position, and how it may be aligned and combined with a Social Worker position to be shared by Lincoln High School and River Cities High School. Details will be shared with the Board once a recommendation is developed.
- Committee members expressed appreciation in seeing new objectives in the plan covering the use of ESSER III funds and District referendum projects
- indoor air quality initiatives were discussed, including the ventilation/filtration systems currently in place

ES-2 Motion by John Krings, seconded by Sandra Hett, to approve the 2022-2023 Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools (WRPS) Strategic Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

C. ESSER III Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan

Ms. Filtz reviewed the proposed ESSER III LEA Plan, outlining the work performed by an ESSER III Planning Committee that included staff members in a variety of roles from across the District at both the elementary and secondary levels. An estimated \$7,081,249.00 in ESSER III funding is available to the District to support its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 20% to be specifically earmarked to implement Evidence-Based Intervention Strategies (EBIS) to address lost learning opportunities. ESSER III funding is available through September 30, 2024. Since the time period covered by the grant technically extends from March, 2020 through September, 2024, the District has hired both professional and support staff members for the 2021-22 school year with funds earmarked from the ESSER III budget, and has also budgeted for these positions in 2022-23 and 2023-24 as noted in the ESSER III plan. Due to the amount of funding involved and the tight turnaround time associated with the plan's development, it is possible that the plan will undergo some adjustment after feedback has been solicited from stakeholders. The plan is due to be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) by March 11, 2022.

Ms. Filtz explained that as the ESSER III Planning Committee met, the focus for funding use has been on how the District can make the biggest impact on the greatest number of students to contribute to their success moving beyond the COVID-19

pandemic. Certain aspects of the plan may or may not be sustainable after the two-year grant period ends; however, having access to the funding allows the District to invest in personnel and implement robust supplemental services to immediately address student academic, social and emotional needs which were deeply impacted by the pandemic. Plan initiatives will continually be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. Funds allocated in the areas of personnel, purchased services, non-capital and capital objects was reviewed.

The Committee had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the plan, and shared the following commentary:

- appreciation for the enhancements in personnel to work directly with students and staff to make an immediate and direct impact that will contribute to student success well into the future
- concerns around the District paying for bus cameras when contractors should incur the cost through their negotiated contract – Mr. Broeren explained that the largest hurdle in obtaining the number of cameras needed is the cost involved. He expressed that there are advantages to using ESSER III funds for this one-time purchase along with having an expectation established with contractors that cameras are to continue to be maintained and upgraded by the vendor once all buses have been outfitted with the equipment. Whether through a one-time purchase now, or through a negotiated contract with the carriers, the District will likely be paying for the equipment one way or the other.
- concern around purchasing vehicles for each elementary school as a method to eliminate transportation barriers in terms of the \$224,000.00 cost to purchase several vehicles and subsequent licensing, insurance, and maintenance. Ms. Filtz explained that elementary principals definitely feel there is a need to remove the barrier that prevents some students from being able to get to school, and buildings would be willing to share vehicles if it came down to that – the only drawback in sharing a vehicle is that it wouldn't necessarily always be available the moment it is needed at a given building. Mr. Broeren clarified that vehicles in the District are fully utilized to their end life, and they are frequently swapped around as necessary to ensure that identified needs are met to support students. He believes the one-time cost involved to purchase the vehicles will help provide a long-term solution for buildings since the vehicles are not anticipated to have high miles put on them each year.
- sentiment was shared around the fact that in lieu of purchasing vans, perhaps there is a need to consider providing inter-city bus stops or bussing for all students throughout the district if transportation is hindering participation – this should be reviewed and discussed during upcoming contractor negotiation sessions and the costs analyzed to determine whether providing this service is sustainable; a key component to also consider is whether or not parents would utilize the service. Mr. Broeren stated that a hold would be put on the ESSER III vehicle purchase while he and Director of Transportation Aaron Nelson work on exploring options, costs, and sustainability to offer district-wide transportation services. It is possible to have a survey developed to determine whether families would use the transportation service if it were offered.

Ms. Filtz explained that the Committee's concerns and feedback will be taken into account moving forward. While the plan must be submitted by March 11th, adjustments to the plan are likely to occur throughout the two-year period of the plan's existence.

Lastly, a landing page dedicated to the ESSER III funding plan has been developed on the WRPS website, and a survey for stakeholder feedback from parents/guardians, students, staff members, and members of the community has been linked to the page. Feedback will be collected from February 7-28, 2022 and then reviewed by the

ESSER III Planning Committee to determine if any adjustments might be helpful to incorporate in the overall plan. Ms. Filtz intends to keep the Board apprised of any significant developments or changes being recommended for ESSER III funds, and intends to bring an update to the Educational Services Committee meeting on March 7, 2022 since feedback will have been gathered and any additional changes being recommended by the ESSER III Planning Committee based upon the feedback will be available.

ES-3 Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by John Krings, to approve the LEA ESSER III Grant Funding Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Updates

A. Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Mid-Year Report Postponed to March, 2022

Ms. Filtz explained that the Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) contract in place with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires that school districts present mid-year and end-of-year information to the Board of Education. Due to high student and teacher absences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of schools have been unable to complete the necessary screening to compile the report. As a result, the report will be postponed to March, 2022 when complete information is available from District schools.

B. Student Summer Travel

Ms. Filtz reported that two student trips planned for Summer, 2022 are being postponed to Summer, 2023. A decision to postpone a trip to Ecuador and the other trip to France was made by January 31, 2022 in order to minimize the amount of financial loss that students and families would experience. Senior students who are missing out on the opportunity to be involved in the trips will have the opportunity to participate in Summer, 2023 if they are interested.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

ES-1 Board Policy 380.1 - Therapy Dogs in Schools and Board Policy 380 – Animals in the School for First Reading

ES-2 Wisconsin Rapids Public School Strategic Plan

ES-3 LEA ESSER III Grant Funding Plan

VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

Agenda items are determined by the Committee Chair after consultation with appropriate administration depending upon other agenda items, presentation information, and agenda availability.

Future agenda items/information requests include, but are not limited to:

- AGR Mid-Year Report (March)
- Early College Credit Program/Start College Now (April)
- Agenda Planners (May)
- K-5 Physical Education Curriculum Maps/Acquisition Update (May)

Mary Rayome adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.