



MINUTES

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

October 3, 2022

LOCATION: Board of Education, 510 Peach Street, Wisconsin Rapids, WI  
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Tracy Ginter, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Betsy Van Berkel, Jen Wilhorn

- I. Call to Order
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Comment
- IV. Actionable Items

A. Board Policy Revisions

Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, presented recommended changes to Board Policy 332.1 Exhibit 1 – Process Guidelines for Requesting New Courses Form, and Board Policy 332.2 Exhibit 2 – Process Guidelines for Pilot Programs or Curriculum Modifications Form, both for first reading. The primary reason for change is to update outdated language found in the policies and align them with current process.

**ES-1 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Krings, to approve the modifications in language to Board Policy 332.1 – Exhibit 1 – Process Guidelines for Requesting New Courses Form, and Board Policy 332.2 – Exhibit 2 – Process Guidelines for Pilot Programs or Curriculum Modifications Form, both for first reading. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. Gaggle Therapy

Steve Hepp, Director of Pupil Services, presented a proposal from Gaggle Therapy to continue providing mental health and support services to students through a secure video platform. The use of Gaggle Therapy has been helpful in meeting existing therapy needs in light of current mental health staff shortages. Parental permission

is required for students to receive services, and Gaggle Therapy follows all FERPA and HIPAA guidelines. There are no out of pocket costs for parents or families. WRPS pays a retainer fee and can use the services as needed, with any unused service credit being either refunded or rolled over to the next year. The \$55,000 retainer fee is based on a percentage of the District's student population and would be paid for using ESSER III funds. Committee members asked questions about the program's success, and to what degree these services supplement what is available through current staffing in the District.

**ES-2 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Krings, to approve the purchase of Gaggle Therapy at a cost of \$55,000.00 as proposed, to be funded through ESSER III dollars. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. When Life's a Puzzle Counseling and Consulting (WLPCC)

Mr. Hepp explained that the District has been contracting with When Life's a Puzzle Counseling and Consulting (WLPCC) to provide mental health therapy and counseling services to students attending Howe Elementary School. Participation is voluntary and can end at any time. Students are referred for services via a staff member or parent, and parents sign a permission form in order for their student to participate. Costs for the sessions were shared, and Mr. Hepp explained that there is no out of pocket costs for families. Services end at the end of the school year, or if the funding threshold of \$20,000 is reached. ESSER III funds would be utilized to support these services. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the services.

**ES-3 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Julie Timm, to approve the purchase of therapy sessions from When Life's a Puzzle Counseling and Consulting not to exceed \$20,000.00, to be funded through ESSER III dollars. Motion carried unanimously.**

D. Families and Schools Together (FAST)

Mr. Hepp provided an overview of the FAST (Families and Schools Together) program, which is an internationally acclaimed parent engagement program that helps children succeed at school by building stronger, more supportive relationships at home. Built on evidence-based practices and rigorously tested, FAST empowers parents to become more effective family leaders, connects families to schools, and creates a community engaged in children's well-being and education. Activities are designed to strengthen family bonds, empower parents, increase positive communication, and improve the child's overall academic performance and emotional functioning. Pitsch Early Learning Center and Washington Elementary School have been selected and are being recommended to complete one FAST training cycle at a cost of \$14,000. Funds from the Mental Health Grant will be used to pay for the FAST program. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions about the program.

**ES-4 Motion by John Krings, seconded by Larry Davis, to approve the purchase of Families and Schools Together for Pitsch Early Learning Center and Washington Elementary School at a cost of \$14,000.00 to be funded through the Mental Health Grant. Motion carried unanimously.**

E. ExploreLearning Reflex and Frax Math Program Renewals

Ms. Filtz explained that ExploreLearning Reflex is an adaptive and individualized computer software program that helps our students in grades 2+ master basic facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Frax is an adaptive and game-based software program for grades 3+ that uses the latest research-based instructional methods to create a better way to learn fractions. With Frax, students come to understand that fractions are numbers too. The fun challenges, personalized instruction, and motivating rewards help students build their skills and understanding.

Mead Elementary began using Reflex in September, 2018 and has seen a marked improvement in students' basic fact fluency by the time they reach 5th grade. Last year (2021-2022), Reflex was also purchased and used in grades 2-5 at Grant, Grove, Howe, THINK, Washington, and Woodside, as well as in grades 6-7 at WRAMS. Frax was purchased as a trial-run last year at Mead, THINK, and Washington. Students found it very engaging, and teachers noticed an overall improvement in the fraction-sense of their students. The current license renewal cost would be \$22,154.41 for one year; however, if a Reflex/Frax license were to be included at all seven elementary schools as well as WRAMS, the total cost will be \$25,304.41 which is what the administration recommends. Committee members raised questions around the use of Renaissance software programs for math, and expressed support for the game-based, engaging programming the Reflex and Frax software seems to offer.

**ES-5 Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Troy Bier, to approve a one-year license renewal of ExploreLearning Reflex and Frax software programs for grades 2-8 in all seven elementary buildings, as well as WRAMS, for a total cost of \$25,304.41 to be paid for through the District curriculum budget. Motion carried unanimously.**

V. Updates

A. New Course/Curriculum Modifications and Proposals

Board Policy 332 Experimental/Innovative Programs, Board Policy 332.1 – Exhibit 1- Process Guidelines for Requesting New Courses Form, and Board Policy 332.2 –Exhibit 2- Process Guidelines for Pilot Programs or Curriculum Modifications Form, outline the requirements to add or modify courses or curriculum in the District. Any proposals for course or curriculum additions or modifications are submitted to the Director of Curriculum & Instruction for consideration no later than the end of September. Ms. Filtz described the process for proposal review by relevant Council for Instructional Improvement (CII) Sub-Committees and building leadership committees. Eventually the CII casts an advisory vote on each proposal which then gets taken to the Board through the Educational Services Committee for approval.

Ms. Filtz and leaders in various curricular areas presented new course and curriculum modification proposals as follows:

1. New Course Proposals
  - a. Automotive and Home Maintenance (*presented by Scott Benitz*)
  - b. JROTC (*presented by Randy Vinter*)

- c. Digital Media and Live Broadcast *(presented by Brian Huglen)*
- d. Post-Apocalyptic Literature *(presented by Matt Bates)*
- e. Theatrical Events Capstone *(presented by Sara Danke Lukaszewicz)*
- f. Creative Drama *(presented by Sara Danke Lukaszewicz)*
- g. Lincoln High School Science Modifications *(presented by Dave Bergerson)*
  - PLTW: Human Body Systems
  - PLTW: Principles of Biomedical Science
  - General Physics 1
  - Physics 101 A & B
  - Biotechnology Explorations
  - AP Chemistry
  - Topics in Physical Science & Topics of Life Science
  - Physical Science and Society and Life Science and Society

Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions of the presenters, and signaled overall support for the new opportunities being developed for the benefit of students. Ms. Filtz explained that the proposals will be presented at the next Council for Instructional Improvement (CII) Committee meeting and undergo an advisory vote. In November, 2022, a final recommendation on the proposals will be brought forward to the Board through the Educational Services Committee for consideration and approval.

#### B. Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) Results: 2021-2022

Ms. Filtz presented WSAS results for the 2021-22 school year which had been embargoed by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and were released on September 29, 2022 for public viewing through the WISEdash public portal. Specific test results reviewed by Ms. Filtz include the Wisconsin Forward Exam, ACT Aspire, ACT with Writing, and Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). Overall results indicate that WRPS is falling behind academically at several grade levels when compared to surrounding districts and the State.

There are numerous potential factors involved which the administrative team and staff members believe may be contributing to the decline in scores including: circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting student demographics, family engagement, student apathy and lack of attendance, teaching strategies, district and building level leadership, curriculum resources, professional development deficits, and testing logistics and timing. Ms. Filtz stated that there is no one single reason for lower test scores, and there is not one single solution to address the scores. School district leaders and staff members acknowledge there is work to be done to make improvement in academic outcomes, and will be analyzing every area possible that may be impeding progress.

Swift action has already begun to immediately implement initiatives that the administration believes will improve outcomes. An action plan has been developed to refine the data driven decision making process through better utilization of Professional Learning Community (PLC) time by taking deeper dives into analyzing data and working collaboratively to improve teaching and learning. WSAS results will be triangulated with other data collected including district screeners in reading and math, absentee and truancy rates, discipline data, behavioral data, and other pieces of information that will help identify deficit areas.

Ms. Filtz reviewed a number of supports that have been implemented for the 2022-23 school year including reducing class sizes; increasing pupil services staff to lend

assistance and support to students, teachers, and families; implementation of the "Move This World" curriculum in elementary classrooms to help regulate students and support their social and emotional needs; piloting of two similar social emotional programs at the middle school for eventual adoption and implementation; increased reading and math interventionist staffing at all levels; enhanced dyslexic programming through additional staff training; targeted special education and ELL curriculum resources purchased to support reading instruction; continued implementation of the new math program at grades 4K-5; implementation of a new data warehousing system to provide teachers with real time data on individual students to detect and address identified deficits immediately; and numerous new initiatives at the middle school to improve school climate and culture, offer alternative programming for students struggling in the traditional classroom setting, using the Block schedule in unique ways to infuse intervention into math and English classes on a daily basis, and increase family engagement.

WRPS staff and administration acknowledge the work that needs to be done to improve WSAS scores. Entering the 2022-23 school year, Ms. Filtz described a more positive and energetic vibe by staff with an overall "can do" attitude compared to the prior two years. The administration is confident that the action plan developed to make strides toward improvement will translate to greater student success in the future.

#### VI. Consent Agenda Items

**ES-1 Board Policy 332.1 Exhibit 1 – Process Guidelines for Requesting New Courses Form and Board Policy 332.2 Exhibit 2 – Process Guidelines for Pilot Programs or Curriculum Modifications for First Reading**

**ES-2 Gaggle Therapy Services**

**ES-3 Therapy Sessions from When Life's a Puzzle**

**ES-4 Families and Schools Together Program**

#### 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:

- New Course/Curriculum Modification Proposals – Decision (November)
- ESSER III Update (November)
- ECP /SCN (November)
- Innovation Mini Grant Recipients (December)
- School & District Report Cards (December)

Katie Medina adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.