



Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee

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

MINUTES

Katie Bielski-Medina, Chairperson
John Benbow, Jr.
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
John Krings, President
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz
Julie Timm

July 10, 2023

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

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Larry Davis, John Krings, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Julie Timm

BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED: Katie Bielski-Medina

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Christine Slattery, Jen Wilhorn

- I. President John Krings called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- III. Public Comment – none.
- IV. Actionable Items

A. Pupil Academic Standards

Jennifer Wilhorn, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction, presented the pupil academic standards that will be in place for the 2023-24 school year. As is required under State Statute, parents will be provided notice via the WRPS website about pupil academic standards information.

ES-1 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the Pupil Academic Standards as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Playworks

Steve Hepp, Director of Pupil Services, explained that the administration is interested in implementing the Playworks program at Grant, Grove, Howe, and THINK Academy during the 2023-24 school year at a total cost of \$68,000.00 which would be paid for through the Get Kids Ahead Grant. Implementation of Playworks will help address behavioral concerns that have been increasing during recess periods, and should reduce the frequency of office referrals being made during these times.

Playworks is an evidence-based program that offers children an opportunity to develop and practice critical social-emotional skills through play. Playworks will provide an on-site coordinator who teaches, models, and empowers the implementation of a sustainable recess program. Four days of on-site training, consulting, and capacity building are included in the purchase. Four buildings are interested in implementing for 2023-24, while other buildings plan to monitor the program to see how things go. Committee members inquired about which other districts are using the program and which employee serves in the designated recess coach role. Mr. Hepp explained that the program has gained momentum in the southeastern portion of the state, and buildings will determine which staff member will serve in this role, but it is highly likely that noon aides will be the individuals involved.

ES-2 Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Julie Timm to approve of the implementation of the Playworks Program at Grant, Grove, Howe and THINK elementary schools during the 2023-2024 school year at the cost of \$68,000 to be funded through the Get Kids Ahead Grant. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program Extension

Mr. Hepp explained that the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program was well received and successful when offered during the 2022-23 school year at Pitsch Early Learning Center and Washington Elementary School. FAST sessions are led by a team of one parent partner, school staff, and two community partners who empower parents and connect families to school and community. Pitsch and Washington will continue to implement FAST during the 2023-2024 school year, and the administration recommends expanding the program to include Grove and Howe Elementary schools for a total cost of \$14,000.00. Each FAST team member will receive a stipend based on their involvement, and the total projected cost for the stipends is \$15,280.00. Funds from the Get Kids Ahead Grant will be used to pay for the FAST program.

ES-3 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of expanding the Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program to include Grove and Howe elementary schools for the 2023-2024 school year at a total cost of \$14,000 for implementation, as well as approval of stipends estimated to be \$15,280 for Pitsch, Washington, Grove and Howe elementary schools to provide the FAST program, with costs being funded through the Get Kids Ahead Grant. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Equity Walks

The Committee learned that during the 2022-2023 school year three elementary schools (Grove, Howe, and Mead) partnered with CESA 6's Center 4All to complete "Equity Walks" within their buildings. The purpose of the walks was to gather observational data to confirm or challenge assumptions about school improvement and equity, and identify areas in need of improvement. Center 4All consultants and school staff worked together to collect data which was included in a report for each individual building, as well as a system-wide District report. The reports will be used for planning, goal-setting, and inclusive conversation, and will be discussed with various leadership teams to determine next steps.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the administration recommends partnering with Center 4All to also complete Equity Walks at Grant, Lincoln, Pitsch, River Cities, THINK, Washington, Woodside and WRAMS. The contract cost would be \$29,467.78 and includes seven days for the actual building walk-throughs, data collection/analysis, lodging/mileage reimbursement, and presentation on findings. Mr. Hepp explained that since the District has been identified as disproportionate, it is required to budget 15% of IDEA Part B funds for Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) to address the root cause of racial disproportionality as identified through continuous improvement activities. The Equity Walks are considered a continuous improvement activity and would be funded through IDEA Part B funds.

Committee members raised questions around an action plan being developed and whether the administration found the information reported back to be helpful. They would also like a copy of the reporting results. Mr. Hepp explained that each building will review the information and be incorporating action steps in their individual building plans and goals. Conversations around what districtwide improvements might be helpful to implement will also take place. Jen Wilhorn, Assistant Director of Curriculum & Instruction, stated that she believes the Equity Walks are valuable in that they provide an unbiased perspective about school climate and the Center 4All staff were pleasant to work with as they encouraged schools for the positive work being done while also identifying areas for growth.

ES-4 Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve of WRPS partnering with Center 4All to complete equity walks for Grant, Lincoln, Pitsch, River Cities, THINK, Washington, Woodside and WRAMS at a total cost of \$29,467.78 to be funded through IDEA Part B funds. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Education for Homeless and Youth (EHCY) Grant

Mr. Hepp explained that the District has been notified that it has been awarded the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Grant which will provide \$40,000.00 on an annual basis over the next three years. The funding will be directed toward increasing academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness. Committee members questioned whether homeless numbers have remained stable or increased in recent years. Mr. Hepp was not certain, but will follow-up with this information for the Committee.

ES-5 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve of the acceptance of the EHCY grant for \$40,000.00 annually over the next three years. Motion carried unanimously.

F. Public Records Policy Changes

Mr. Broeren reviewed changes with the Wisconsin Records Retention Schedule for School Districts (WRRSSD) in light of a recent update by the Public Records Board (PRB) which approved the General Records Schedule (GRS) for Wisconsin Public School District and Related Records, which replaces the WRRSSD. The GRS and WRRSSD are different in that the WRRSSD gave school districts the option to adopt one (1) retention schedule for all records that were likely to be maintained by school districts, regardless of whether those records were unique to school districts; and the

GRS only includes record retention periods for records that are unique to school districts. As a result, it is recommended that school districts adopt the existing records retention schedules, including the GRS, in order to dispose of public records prior to the seven (7) year statutory retention period as set forth in Wis. Stat. § 19.21(6). The eleven records retention schedules being proposed for adoption include: Administrative Records, Budget Records, Facilities Management Records, Fiscal and Accounting Records, Human Resources Records, Information Technology Records, Payroll and Benefits Records, Purchasing and Procurement Records, Risk Management Records, School District Records, and Municipal Records.

Should the Board approve of moving ahead to adopt the retention schedules, the next step in the process will be to complete a "Notification of Adoption" form for each schedule to submit to the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) for formal authorization from the WHS and PRB.

ES-6 Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of fully adopting the Wisconsin General Records Schedule and eleven affiliated records retention schedules as developed by the Public Records Board, and to submit the required Notification of General Records Schedule Adoption forms to the Public Records Board for processing. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Broeren explained that with the approval to adopt the General Records Schedule (GRS) and affiliated records retention schedules, relevant Board policies that speak to records retention will need to be updated. Suggested revisions have been incorporated into Board Policies 347 Rule – Guidelines for the Control and Maintenance of Student Records, 525 – Personnel Records, 823 – Access to Public Records, as well as the Resolution Regarding Procedures for Release of Public Records and Property. Committee members reviewed the policies.

ES-7 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of Board Policies 347 Rule – Guidelines for the Control and Maintenance of Student Records, 525 – Personnel Records, 823 – Access to Public Records, as well as proposed updates to the Resolution Regarding Procedures for Release of Public Records and Property. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Updates

A. Reading Corps and Future Forward

Ms. Wilhorn explained that District elementary schools have the opportunity to take advantage of two different programs to support student reading. The first is Reading Corps, which is similar to AmeriCorps but is primarily focused on supporting students identified with a need for reading support. Trained tutors work under the supervision of a Literacy Coach (typically Reading Interventionists) at the building to assist students directly to support them in reading and help them be more successful. Grant Elementary, THINK Academy, and Washington Elementary are currently utilizing Reading Corps programming.

Future Forward is another support system for students who may be experiencing challenges with reading. The District partners with the local Boys & Girls Club in this tutoring program at Grove Elementary and Howe Elementary, and it includes a family component for events such as "Family Night" that is organized and facilitated by Future Forward staff members in collaboration with school staff.

Principal Christine Slattery from THINK Academy confirmed that having Reading Corps at THINK has been very helpful in providing additional supports to students, and parents have expressed their appreciation for the program. She described some of the activities involved with Reading Corps, and the positive impact she has seen to help students master letter-sound recognition and get those that needed it back on track after the lengthy summer break. The Reading Interventionist does a great job at THINK, and the additional layer of support and relationship connection with Reading Corps tutors who are working directly with students has given students a confidence boost that has helped enhance their reading skills.

B. Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) End-of-Year Report

Ms. Wilhorn presented the Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) End-of-Year Report, explaining that the strike-through areas with numbers corrected below them on the report are due to the administration's use of eduCLIMBER to gather and accumulate data tied to the report. Utilizing eduCLIMBER helped to identify some errors in how data was being collected and reported for the mid-year report, which have since been corrected. For the most part, growth has been seen in most grade levels and schools. However, there are some areas of concern where the 80% benchmark is not being met. The administration and building teams will be focusing on determining what supports are needed to help students be more successful.

In terms of next year, Ms. Wilhorn explained that the AGR report will look quite different due to the PALS assessment being sunsetted and with the District moving to STAR Early Literacy to replace it. Additionally, rather than having mid-year and end-of-year expectations which has been like trying to hit a moving target, the primary focus will be on the end-of-year expectations set. This may result in scores looking low at the mid-year reporting point; however, this should change as schools work to help students master content and strive toward meeting the end-of-year target.

Committee members were encouraged to see that the data reflects increases toward the benchmarks from mid-year to end-of-year rather than decreases with the exception of certain areas in math. Questions were raised around whether certain scores were a symptom of the screener or the standard in place. Ms. Wilhorn explained it relates more to the standards and that for grades K-1, District created screeners are used whereas in grades 2-3, STAR Math is utilized which is more standardized. Conversation was had around how the data from the reports is primarily generated to assist staff in identifying areas to provide additional supports and strengthen areas where necessary. While the District acquisition cycle for replacing language arts materials was already in process, Ms. Wilhorn and Mr. Broeren explained there likely will be substantial modifications in early literacy content and assessments coming up as the State moves toward sweeping changes in this area and develops potential lists of curriculum programs and/or resources

that school districts will be able choose from, and possibly in the case of a statewide assessment, be required to utilize.

Lastly, Mr. Broeren provided an overview of the historical trajectory and evolution of the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program to the AGR program and its affiliated requirements. With respect to student to teacher ratios specifically, he also briefly mentioned the intentional increased staffing levels by the District at the elementary level in recent years, made possible through ESSER funding, as a way to maintain lower class sizes to help address learning loss and other issues brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

ES-1 2023-24 Pupil Academic Standards

ES-2 Purchase and Implementation of Playworks Program in 2023-24

ES-3 Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program for 2023-24

ES-4 Partnership with Center 4All to Complete Equity Walks

ES-5 Education for Homeless and Youth (EHCY) Grant

ES-6 Adoption of Wisconsin General Records Schedule and Affiliated Retention Schedules

ES-7 First Reading of Board Policies 347-Rule, 525, 823, and Adoption of Resolution Regarding Procedures for Release of Public Records and Property

VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Committee reviewed the following future agenda items:

- Seclusion and Restraint Report (August)
- Board Policy 354 Student Travel (August)
- Nurse Handbook (August)
- Parent Council for Instructional Improvement Representative (September)
- ESSA Update (September)

Mr. Krings adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.