



MINUTES

Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee

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

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

September 5, 2023

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

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Katie Bielski-Medina, John Krings, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Julie Timm

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Larry Davis

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson

- I. Call to Order
- II. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- III. Public Comment – none.
- IV. Actionable Items
 - A. Council for Instructional Improvement (CII) Committee Parent Representative

Ms. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, explained that the District CII Committee has three parent representatives who serve three-year rotating terms. A parent’s term has concluded, leaving one open seat for representation. The opening was posted widely during the month of August, and of the 26 individuals who requested an application, 10 were returned by the deadline. All applications had identifying information removed for anonymity and were then scored individually by Central Office Directors and Superintendent Broeren using a rubric which focuses on candidates having an interest in student well-being, support for public education, a willingness to speak and share ideas, having relatable experience in serving on a committee and positive group work experience with shared decision making, an understanding of curriculum in the educational process, and the ability to make it to all four CII meetings. The candidate receiving the highest overall score, Josette Lang, was selected to bring forward for the Board’s consideration and approval.

ES-1 Motion by John Krings, seconded by Julie Timm, to recommend approval of the candidate chosen as the parent representative, Josette Lang, to serve on the CII for the 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Academic Calendars for 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28

Ms. Filtz presented proposed academic calendars for the 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28 school years. The calendar takes into account the number of contracted teacher work days which include 176 student contact days, 3 in-service days, 5 professional development days, 2 recordkeeping days, 1 parent teacher conference day, and 3 paid holidays. Several stakeholder groups including the Quality Educator Committee (QEC) and administration provided input into the development of the calendars.

Ms. Filtz mentioned that GOP legislators are circulating a proposal to allow an earlier school start date which would allow school districts to start school on the Monday before Labor Day. Under current law, public schools are prohibited from starting instruction prior to September 1st unless granted an exception from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) due to extraordinary circumstances. Past attempts at full repeal of this law have been opposed by the tourism industry; however, the newly introduced legislation would require school districts who start prior to Labor Day to designate the Friday before Labor Day as a non-instructional day. Should the law change, the calendars may undergo additional review and be brought back through to the Board for additional consideration.

After receiving feedback from QEC representatives and conducting surveys among staff, it became clear that the non-report date scheduled in October for Autumn Break and front-loading professional development days in August is well received by a majority of staff members. Other dates considered during calendar development included the day before Thanksgiving and Good Friday, which at times is able to be incorporated into Spring Break. Trimester days were balanced out to have more days in Trimester 2 given the number of inclement weather days that often impact this timeframe.

Committee members asked questions around the scheduled parent teacher conference day, and the value of front-loading professional development days when it leaves a gap in similar days offered in spring. Ms. Filtz explained that staff are refreshed and better able to learn when they return from summer break, and the timing of the August days aligns well when new curriculum is being implemented.

ES-2 Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by John Krings, to recommend the approval of the proposed calendars for the 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28 school years. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Updates

A. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Ms. Filtz provided an update on the status of Title grant funding received through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). For 2023-24, the District will receive \$1,367,678.00 in Title I, \$189,168.00 for Title II, and \$84,871.00 for Title IV. These amounts do not include any carryover dollars from unspent 2022-23 Title funding which is still being determined. The total of \$1,641,717.00 in ESSA grant funds designated for 2023-2024 is an increase of \$208,616.00 from the 2022-2023 school year, and the four School Wide Title buildings being served include Grove, Howe, Mead and River Cities High School. Ms. Filtz is waiting to receive information concerning 2023-24 Title III funding amounts.

Title I funds are allocated for improving basic programs by bringing new resources and requirements to provide personnel, instruction and interventions to close achievement gaps districtwide. Title I supports some reading and math interventionists and programs at Title schools, assists with homeless programming personnel and transportation costs, provides professional development for staff members, funds parent involvement activities in Title buildings, and allows the District to employ behavior support paraprofessionals at Title buildings.

Title II funds are used for preparing, training and recruiting high quality teachers, principals and other school personnel. Funds are used to support the New Colleague/Mentor Program, offset the salary of one Student Engagement Facilitator and one achievement gap reduction teacher, and supports instructor stipends paid for professional development opportunities.

Title IV funds are used to ensure that WRPS students have access to a well-rounded education, promote safe and healthy schools, and provide an effective use of technology across the district. Title IV is used to offset the cost of conferences, teacher training, supports grade level leaders, provides supplies for parent outreach, and supports professional development around learning management systems.

Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions. Questions were raised around specific title funding amounts and allocations, Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) staffing, and Ms. Stebbins-Hintz questioned whether a portion of the increased Title funding might be considered to fund a portion of the Assistant Director of Curriculum & Instruction position which recently underwent a reduction. Ms. Filtz clarified that a small amount of Title funds do currently cover a portion of the Assistant Director's salary.

B. Multi-Level Systems of Supports (MLSS) Handbook

Ms. Filtz and Sunshine Broeren, Occupational Therapist and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Coordinator, provided an update on work that has been accomplished to develop a Multi-Level Systems of Supports (MLSS) Handbook which is centered around the belief that all students can learn and achieve. The MLSS framework outlines a process to achieve higher levels of academic, social, emotional and behavioral success for all students.

Using a team approach and through the strategic use of student data, educators will best identify students' needs and work together to implement tiered interventions that will help students achieve in all areas. The MLSS process is intended to equip teachers with the tools they need to help students be successful in the classroom setting. Ms. Filtz reviewed the continuum of the leveled system of supports from Tier 1 to Tier 3 and explained that in a sustainable system, at least 80% of learners have their needs met through Tier 1 support, 5-15% of learners across Tier 2 access this level of support in addition to the universal level, and only 1-5% of learners should require access to Tier 3 levels of support. Differences between academic versus behavioral interventions were explained.

The MLSS framework has been introduced to the administrative team and will continue to be emphasized and worked into building level teams and processes throughout the upcoming year.

Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions. A question was raised around how individual teachers receive the information and understand what is expected of them. Ms. Filtz explained that the MLSS framework will be presented to staff through a virtual meeting which will explain the process and specifically define the tiered levels. Staff will also receive a copy of the actual MLSS Handbook and a listing of possible interventions to be used as processes are established and implemented at the building level. Committee members requested that a copy of the intervention listing be provided to them. Ms. Filtz explained that the list will be provided and has been intentionally left out of the MLSS Handbook due to its fluid properties as intervention strategies change and evolve. Ms. Broeren explained that interventions at each building and level will look different depending upon the student and circumstances involved; however, the team approach to track and evaluate data to best align resources and supports for students will help them meet the most success. Use of the eduCLIMBER system will help strengthen the coordination and communication of student information across all levels and classrooms and enhance collaboration.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz questioned who was involved in developing the MLSS Handbook which as she understands would replace the Board approved RtI Handbook. She feels there is value in understanding who has been involved in the process to formulate a system that will be replacing what others were initially a part of developing. In this way, staff members will know that a vast representation from across the District was involved. Ms. Broeren explained that all buildings, levels, and disciplines were included and a part of the process. Ms. Filtz stated that in her experience with the RtI Committee over the years, the committee became too large which caused it to be less effective. By breaking out into smaller groups and evaluating the entire framework, the MLSS process was developed by taking much of what was in place and building upon it.

Mr. Broeren explained that as the MLSS process unfolds and is operationalized, additional information will be brought back to the Board in the form of an update or for action as appropriate. Action might be related to policies or the MLSS Handbook itself as adjustments are made during its implementation. While the intervention list will be a helpful guide and idea starter for staff, it will not be a "go-to" as the end all, be all when dealing with student behavior. Instead the holistic, collaborative problem-solving approach will be the way appropriate supports and resources are

decided upon and implemented. Ms. Filtz explained that the Danielson Framework for Teaching language used in the Educator Effectiveness process is also being updated to reflect the MLSS process and will ultimately tie back into the District Professional Development Plan.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz expressed that she will be interested in seeing additional details in the future, particularly recommendations related to Board policies that speak to student behavior.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

ES-1 Council for Instructional Improvement (CII) Parent Representative Appointment

ES-2 Academic Calendars for 2025-26, 2026-27, and 2027-28

VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Committee reviewed the following future agenda items:

- New Course/Curriculum Modifications and Proposals (October)
- Act 20 Updates (October)
- GATES Update (October)
- Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) Results (October/November)
- New Course/Curriculum Modifications and Proposals (November)
- ECCP / SCN Applications (November)
- Innovation Mini Grant Recipients (December)

Ms. Medina adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.