



MINUTES

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

December 4, 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, Katie Bielski-Medina, Troy Bier, Larry Davis, John Krings,
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Julie Timm

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, 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. Increased Annual Funding Request for Boys & Girls Club of the Wisc. Rapids Area

Ms. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, reviewed an increased funding request for the Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area (BGCWRA). The District has provided an annual amount of \$55,000 through the Community Services Fund 80 for many years to support after school programs, transportation, non-covered meals, and the “Be Great Graduate Program.” Superintendent Craig Broeren explained that the services offered by BGCWRA were once covered via CLC grant funding at Mead Elementary which became unavailable. Given the level of BGCWRA services being provided to a high number of District students, the administration is recommending an increase of \$30,000 to support and sustain BGCWRA programming for a total annual amount of \$85,000. Jennifer Allen, Chief Executive Officer of BGCWRA, was also present to answer any questions of Committee members.

ES-1 Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Julie Timm, to recommend approval of increasing the annual funding to the Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area from \$55,000 to \$85,000 annually to support afterschool programs, transportation, non-covered meals, and the “Be Great Graduate Program” with funding from Fund 80. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Continuation of the Morning Jumpstart Program

Ms. Filtz explained that the Morning Jumpstart program was started in conjunction with the BGCWRA organization at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year through the use of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funding made available during the COVID-19 pandemic. ESSER III funding expires in September, 2024. The Morning Jumpstart program has been offered in six of seven elementary schools and has become hugely successful as parents take advantage of this before-school, on-site childcare option for their children. Over 260 students across the six buildings are participating in Morning Jumpstart. Grant Elementary does not have an on-site Morning Jumpstart offering because of the YMCA Kids Clubhouse program that had already been in existence there; however, there are some Grant families who do choose to drop their children off at Washington Elementary to take advantage of the Morning Jumpstart program and then have their students transported to Grant in time for the school day.

With ESSER III funding running out, the administration is interested in continuing its collaborative partnership with BGCWRA to expand the program to include Grant Elementary beginning in 2024-25 and provide funding support to ensure the program's sustainability into the future through an annual commitment of \$150,000 using Community Service Fund 80 dollars. The program is fully operated by BGCWRA who employs a number of WRPS staff members already connected to the school. It is helpful to have District employees involved since they are familiar with WRPS operations and buildings, they do not mind picking up the extra time before their District employment schedule begins which makes it easier to fill the Morning Jumpstart positions, and many have established relationships with the students and families being served. If the program is discontinued and moved back to the BGCWRA facility, only 80 students would be able to be serviced due to space constraints. This could result in over 100 children potentially being put on a waiting list.

Committee members raised questions around the cost involved for families, whether younger students under the age of six can participate, and how successful staff recruitment and retention has been for the program.

ES-2 Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by John Krings, to recommend approval of continuing the Morning Jumpstart Program, including Grant Elementary, in collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area and funding the program with \$150,000 annually to be paid through Fund 80. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Memorandum of Understanding for "Be Great, Graduate" Program

Ms. Filtz presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to continue working with the Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area (BGCWRA) to offer a "Be Great, Graduate" site-based program. A "Graduation Specialist" staff member employed by BGCWRA works with 15 to 20 students in the District who have been identified as in need of assistance to enhance the skills necessary to graduate from high school. A heavy mentoring component is involved with the Graduation Specialist working closely with students from the Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School and Lincoln High School to support them and help them stay on track toward graduation.

ES-3 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm, to recommend approval of the proposed memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Boys & Girls Club of the Wisconsin Rapids Area to implement the school based "Be Great, Graduate" program at the Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School and Lincoln High School effective December 11, 2023 through June 30, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Proposed Changes for Summer Academy

Ms. Filtz introduced newly hired administrator Leslie Anderson who will assume oversight of the Summer Academy program beginning with the 2024 year. Ms. Anderson explained that due to the Skyward student database management system being changed over to the Qmlativ system in July, 2024, a shortened version of Summer Academy programming is being proposed since the availability of software support is critical in operating the program smoothly and successfully. Currently the elementary program runs in two, three-week sessions for a total of six weeks throughout the summer. In 2023, 486 students attended the various 35 course offerings, and 42 teachers were hired. Grades 6-8 have limited options as student interest at the middle school level is low with only 39 students participating in 2023.

The proposed changes for 2024 include: shortening the schedule to run June 10-28, 2023; move from individual course offerings to full grade level courses; move the elementary 4K-grade 5 program to either the Woodside or Washington school site; and move grades 6-8 remedial programming to the Lincoln High School site where all secondary level summer programming will occur. Implementing these changes for 2024 will accommodate the Skyward concern, be more cost effective, streamline scheduling, and provide content flexibility. Ms. Anderson has presented the proposal to District leadership teams and the Council for Instructional Improvement (CII) committee. A survey around the changes was also sent to staff who seemed receptive to the proposed changes. If the Board approves the proposal, communication will go out to staff members and families in order to prepare for an earlier registration schedule so that staffing decisions can be made in a timely manner. Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the proposal.

ES-4 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the proposed changes to the 2024 Summer Academy Program with a single session to be held from June 10-28, 2024; scheduling classes as K-5 grade level classes that incorporate the unique and fun course offerings as offered in the past; moving 4K-grade 5 Summer Academy to either Woodside or Washington Elementary; and moving grades 6-8 remedial courses to Lincoln High School. Motion carried unanimously.

E. K-5 Science Curriculum Maps

Ms. Filtz introduced Dave Bergerson, District Science Curriculum Coordinator, to present proposed changes to curriculum maps for the K-5 science curriculum. Mr. Bergerson explained that numerous elementary teachers throughout the District have been dabbling in the "Mystery Science" curriculum in their classrooms, and there are only a handful of teachers who are not using it to some degree. The curriculum began to be used during the COVID-19 shutdown as teachers scrambled for resources to use that align with the Next Generation of Science Standards (NGSS). The Mystery Science curriculum aligns quite well with the standards, and has all of the mapping already incorporated even down to each unit and lesson. Mystery Science is being proposed for Board approval and adoption; once approved, the curriculum maps incorporated in Mystery Science are recommended for approval beginning with the third trimester of the 2023-24 school year.

ES-5 Motion by John Krings, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the proposed K-5 Science curriculum maps beginning with the third trimester of the 2023-24 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

F. K-5 Science Curriculum Materials Acquisition

Mr. Bergerson explained that nearly all elementary teachers are utilizing the Mystery Science curriculum across grades K-5 since being thrust into using alternative options and resources as a result of the COVID-19 shutdown. Teachers using Mystery Science rave about how engaging and straightforward it is to implement, and students have shown an increased interest and enjoyment in learning science content. Additionally, since Mystery Science has begun to be used, student State assessment scores have shown marked improvement above State average results. One of the resources used in the curriculum is a "Mystery Pack" which are kits that would cost a tremendous amount if purchased; the District saves a huge sum by making copies for the kits and having high school students in the special education program assist in the assembly of these materials.

Ms. Filtz stated that with major changes coming as a result of Wisconsin Act 20 to implement a new Reading program starting with the 2024-25 school year, moving the science curriculum acquisition timing up to implement it in the third trimester of the 2023-24 school year makes sense. Nearly all teachers are familiar and/or using the resources already, so it shouldn't be burdensome to adopt it yet this year. This will help clear the way for significant elementary Reading changes coming which includes the adoption of new English and Language Arts (ELA) curriculum materials and assessments by the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. This modified schedule will move the ELA curriculum acquisition cycle up by one year.

ES-6 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the eight year purchase of Mystery Science for all seven elementary schools and Central Oaks Academy at a total cost of \$78,120 to be funded through the District Curriculum Referendum budget; the cost includes a \$33,824 discount for committing to an eight-year renewal. Motion carried unanimously.

G. Universal Late Start Mondays

Ms. Filtz presented a Universal Late Start proposal to be effective at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. The administration believes that the need for Professional Learning Communities (PLC) time is no longer a benefit, but rather a necessity at all buildings. In seeking to find a balance between scheduling, busing, and teacher collaboration time, a 45-minute late start on Mondays is being requested.

Having a single plan benefits all students through consistency in scheduling and providing equity between buildings. Ms. Filtz explained how the PLC process is emphasized in the District Strategic Plan as time to be used to analyze and investigate student achievement data to identify, implement, and engage in best instructional practices that benefit a diverse student population. Common PLC time will provide time needed for building administrators to be instructional leaders in their schools, and also help K-12 department collaboration including in the areas of music, art, and physical education. PLC time will be dedicated toward continued implementation of the WRPS Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS) in efforts to build robust district-wide systems for behavioral intervention.

Ms. Filtz mentioned that with the implementation of Act 20 legislation looming, having consistent universal late starts will help support professional development needs, curriculum implementation, additional assessment and analysis, writing Individualized Reading Plans as required, and increase parent communication. To provide some context to the work that will need to be done in this regard, Ms. Filtz shared a projected number of over 570 Act 20 Reading Plans that would be required if the implementation had occurred in 2023-24 across all K-3 grade levels.

Lastly, Ms. Filtz explained other reasons as to why Mondays were chosen over other weekdays, including the fact that there are fewer days of instruction impacted on Mondays in comparison to other days of the week. Consideration will need to be given to the impact on Jumpstart programming, transportation of students, breakfast service, and athletic/club activities. In terms of the required number of hours of instruction being met at each building as outlined under statute, the Universal Late Start shouldn't cause any issues in this regard since the proposal does take these requirements into account. If approved, the administration will clearly communicate with all stakeholders involved to ensure a smooth implementation occurs. Superintendent Broeren remarked that the timing is right to implement a universal time for deliberate PLC work with the Morning Jumpstart program in place, and when considering the demands coming that are connected to Act 20 legislation; he fully supports the proposal. He further mentioned that the exorbitant work to implement Act 20 will likely devalue the work that PLC time is specifically designed to accomplish, which is unfortunate. Lastly, he shared his frustration around the disdain that seemingly exists toward public schools from some in the community when public schools work extremely hard to serve the needs of every single student. He shared his disappointment that private/voucher schools are not held accountable to the same degree as public schools, nor are they vilified in the same manner.

Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the proposal and expressed their appreciation for the exemplary thought and planning that went into the recommendation.

ES-7 Motion by John Krings, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of a districtwide universal "Late Start Monday" program beginning with the 2024-25 school year that would delay the start of school each Monday by 45 minutes for the purpose of uninterrupted collaboration time for teachers across the district. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Updates

A. Innovation Mini Grant Recipients for 2023-24

Ms. Filtz reviewed three Innovation Mini Grant awards presented to:

- ◆ Dustin Anderson – Laser Learning ~ Cutting Edge Creativity in Art
- ◆ Leslie Anderson – Kindness Club
- ◆ Morgan Graf – Calming Sensory Room

Each recipient receives \$1,000 to use toward their project plus a \$1,000 stipend in the spring after the project has been fully implemented.

B. School and District Report Cards for 2022-23

Ms. Filtz presented the District and School Report Cards for the 2022-23 school year. Overall scores are as follows:

| Location | Overall Score | Rating |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--|
| District | 66.2 | Meets Expectations |
| Central Oaks Academy | 67.0 | Meets Expectations |
| Grant Elementary | 67.1 | Meets Expectations |
| Grove Elementary | 72.3 | Exceeds Expectations |
| Howe Elementary | 77.6 | Exceeds Expectations |
| Mead Elementary | 66.8 | Meets Expectations |
| THINK Academy | 72.5 | Exceeds Expectations |
| Washington Elementary | 79.2 | Exceeds Expectations |
| Woodside Elementary | 68.1 | Meets Expectations |
| Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School | 58.6 | Meets Expectations |
| Lincoln High School | 69.9 | Meets Expectations |
| River Cities High School | AR | Alternate Rating – Satisfactory Progress |

Ms. Filtz stated that WRPS fared well in comparison to surrounding school districts and she is pleased that the report cards not only take achievement into account, but also other value added reporting factors that impact student outcomes such as growth, target group outcomes, and on-track to graduation readiness. District schools are doing well to meet the needs of the diverse student population they are serving. Ms. Filtz explained how target group outcomes are determined and the rationale behind monitoring this particular group as a method to gauge how successful schools are at reaching all of their students. Ms. Filtz reviewed postsecondary preparation data which covers advanced courses, dual enrollment, industry-recognized credentials, and work-based learning information. The District can be proud of its accomplishments that are evident from the report card data. Recognizing that there are always ways in which to improve, staff members continue to be committed to the work at hand to search for ways to implement instructional strategies and supports that maximize student outcomes and success. Ms. Filtz expressed pride in the District's robust offerings in programming from early childhood age up through the high school level which are exceptional, and definitely worth celebrating.

Mr. Broeren stated that while he isn't a fan of school report cards, he believes the report cards have come a long way in terms of taking factors into account that contribute to student performance and success. He believes it is relevant to point out that the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) information is purely achievement data and when reviewed, no staff members in the District have ever expressed the idea that there isn't room for improvement. However, when considering the school report cards in their current format, there are many correlations that get taken into account based upon such things as the percentage of economically disadvantaged students attending a particular school. Solely reviewing achievement data without involving other factors simply informs on where economically disadvantaged students live within district boundaries. He clarified that it isn't a matter of stating students living in poverty cannot learn or experience high academic achievement; rather it has more to do with the confluence of factors by which these students are impacted. Examples include one-income households, one-parent households, incarceration, food insecurity, etc. The District's free and reduced population percentage dropped slightly this year, but has otherwise continually been increasing over the years rather than decreasing, which is indicative of a lagging local economy. Even given these circumstances, the school report cards reveal that District schools are successfully meeting the needs of students and helping them experience educational growth, which involves many factors. He stated that schools are not creating the problems they are dealing with, rather they are dealing with the problems created by society.

Lastly, he stated that he takes exception to individuals in the community who try to portray the District as one that accepts low achievement or is unwilling to tackle underperformance when nothing could be further from the truth. On one hand individuals want to focus on WSAS results which may show poor performance during one snapshot in time while on the other hand, the same individuals do not want to celebrate growth indicated on School and District Report Cards. Mr. Broeren stressed the need to flip the narrative to focus on the positives and talk about the good things happening with schools, rather than disparaging individuals or the District when the primary goal of the organization is to ensure that all students succeed. More positive narratives spoken about the good things happening locally would be much more beneficial and helpful to the community's overall success.

Committee members expressed their pride in the achievements and strides being made by District schools to meet student needs and help them reach their full potential. They are appreciative of all staff involved who do everything they can to continually improve and build upon student success; and agree with the sentiment and benefits around spinning a more positive narrative, rather than negative.

C. Student Travel

Ms. Filtz explained that Lincoln High School Orchestra Teacher Ginger Marten will be taking students on a trip to Nashville, Tennessee from June 19-June 23, 2024. Trip highlights were reviewed, including an opportunity for students to perform at the Grand Ole Opry Plaza. The cost of the trip is \$1,399 and funds will be partially raised through fundraisers. Staff members will work through any barriers for students who may be in need of financial assistance so that no one is excluded.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

- ES-1 Boys & Girls Club of the Wisc. Rapids Area Annual Funding Increase**
- ES-2 Morning Jumpstart Program Continuation**
- ES-3 Memorandum of Understanding for School Based "Be Great, Graduate" Program**
- ES-4 Proposed Adjustments for WRPS 2024 Summer Academy Program**
- ES-5 K-5 Science Curriculum Maps**
- ES-6 K-5 Science Curriculum Materials Acquisition**
- ES-7 Proposal for Universal Late Start Monday Program**

VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Committee reviewed the following future agenda items:

- Open Enrollment Space Determination Limits for the 2024-25 School Year (January)
- AGR Mid-Year Report (February)
- District Strategic Plan (February)
- Start College Now (SCN) and Early College Credit Program (ECCP) Applications (April)

Ms. Medina adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.